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ABSTRACT

Prior to a curriculum unit on the English colonies in America taught within a U.S. history course, two classes of fifth-graders stated what they knew or believed was true about colonies and what they wanted to learn about them. After the unit, they reported what they had learned about the English colonies in North America. In addition, a stratified sample of 10 students were interviewed concerning several subtopics. By the end of the unit, students had acquired a good deal of information, although there were important gaps in the students' general knowledge (most notably, lack of knowledge about life in 16th and 17th century England that would provide a reference point for comparisons with life in the colonies) and a variety of misconceptions were developed as the students reasoned from their very limited knowledge bases (e.g., that Europeans started coming to America because Europe was overcrowded, that the colonies were all small villages surrounded by stockades, or that life in all of the colonies resembled life among the Puritans at Plymouth Plantation as it had been depicted to the students via a children's literature selection). The findings illustrate the tradeoffs involved in using children's literature selections rather than traditional textbooks as the primary representation of historical content to children. (Contains 26 references.) (Author/LBG)

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Jere Brophy, Bruce A. VanSledright,
and Nancy Bredin

Center for the
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Abstract

Prior to a curriculum unit on the English colonies in America taught within a U.S. history course, two classes of fifth graders stated what they knew (or thought was true) about colonies and what they wanted to learn about them. After the unit, they reported what they had learned about the general topic of the English colonies in North America. In addition, a stratified sample of 10 students was interviewed concerning the details of their thinking about several key subtopics. Students began the unit with little knowledge about the English colonies beyond the story of the Pilgrims and the first Thanksgiving. By the end of the unit, the students had acquired a good deal of information about the colonies and colonial life, much of it focused on the early settlements at Roanoke Island, Jamestown, and Plymouth, as well as on the institution of slavery. With the help of stories drawn from children's literature, the teacher largely succeeded in her goal of helping students to develop appreciation for the challenges faced by these early emigrants and by making the period "come alive" for them. Still, there were important gaps in the students' general knowledge (most notably, lack of knowledge about life in 16th- and 17th-century England that would provide a reference point for comparisons with life in the colonies) and a variety of misconceptions were developed as the students reasoned from their very limited knowledge bases (e.g., that Europeans started coming to America because Europe was overcrowded, that the colonies were all small villages surrounded by stockades, or that life in all of the colonies resembled life among the Puritans at Plymouth Plantation as it had been depicted to the students via a children's literature selection). The findings illustrate the trade-offs involved in using children's literature selections rather than traditional textbooks as the primary representation of historical content to children.

FIFTH GRADERS' IDEAS ABOUT THE ENGLISH COLONIES IN AMERICA EXPRESSED BEFORE AND AFTER STUDYING THEM WITHIN A U.S. HISTORY COURSE

Jere Brophy, Bruce A. VanSledright, and Nancy Bredin[1]

Current theory and research on subject-matter teaching emphasize the importance of teaching school subjects for understanding, appreciation, and application, not just knowledge memorization and skills practice. Drawing on neo-Vygotskian theorizing and work on knowledge construction and conceptual change, educators have been developing methods of teaching school subjects in ways that connect with students' existing knowledge and experience and engage them in actively constructing new knowledge and correcting existing misconceptions. Progress is most evident in mathematics and science, where rich literatures have developed describing what children typically know (or think they know) about the content taught at their respective grade levels. Curriculum developers can then use this information as a basis for developing instruction that both builds on students' existing valid knowledge and confronts and corrects their misconceptions.

The potential for applying similar concepts and methods to curriculum development appears to be at least as great in social studies as in other school subjects, but realization of this potential cannot occur until a significant knowledge base is developed describing children's knowledge and misconceptions about the social studies content commonly taught at each grade level.

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Establishment of such a knowledge base is only just beginning, especially with respect to children's developing knowledge of U.S. history. So far, child development researchers have concentrated on cognitive structures and strategies that children acquire through general life experiences rather than on their developing understanding of knowledge domains learned primarily at school. Much of this research has focused on mathematical and scientific knowledge, although there have been some studies of stages in the development of economic, political, and social knowledge (Berti & Bombi, 1988; Furnham & Stacey, 1991; Furth, 1980; Moore, Lare, & Wagner, 1985). The literature on cognitive and social development is useful for establishing a context within which to study children's knowledge and misconceptions about topics featured in social studies curricula, but it provides little direct information about particular developments in this knowledge domain.

Nor have scholars concerned with curriculum and instruction in the social studies developed much such information. There have been occasional surveys of children's knowledge about particular social studies topics (Guzzetta, 1969; Ravitch & Finn, 1987). These have concentrated mostly on isolated facts such as names, places, or definitions, with analysis and reporting of findings being limited to the percentages of students in various categories who were able to answer each item correctly. To be more useful to educators, research on children's social studies knowledge needs to shift to more sustained interviewing approaches in which questions are designed to probe children's understanding of connected networks of knowledge. Similarly, the children's responses need to be analyzed with attention to qualitative aspects of their thinking about the topic, including identification of commonly held misconceptions.

Not much work of this kind has been done in history. There have been a few studies of degrees of sophistication in adolescents' historical understandings, mostly in Great Britain (Dickinson & Lee, 1984; Shemilt, 1984). However, there has not been much research on children's knowledge of and thinking about U.S. history. Levstik and Pappas (1987) explored the development of children's historical understandings by asking them to recall a historical narrative and then to define history and distinguish it from "the past." McKeown and Beck (1990) studied fifth-graders' knowledge and thinking about the American Revolution before and after a curriculum unit on the topic. Ramsey, Holbrook, Johnson, and O'Toole (1992) studied four-year-olds' beliefs about Native Americans expressed before and after a curriculum unit designed to broaden their understanding of traditional and contemporary Native-American life and to counteract specific stereotypes.

The authors have initiated a program of research designed to build on these beginnings by interviewing elementary students before and after each of their social studies units. The preunit interviews develop information about the knowledge and misconceptions about unit topics that students possess even before instruction in the unit begins. Thus, the preunit data provide information about what students know (or think they know) about a topic via information acquired in earlier grades or through reading or out-of-school experiences. The postunit data show how the students' knowledge and thinking about the topic have changed in response to the instruction and learning activities they experienced during the unit. These data identify the aspects of unit instruction that were most salient to the students, the degree to which knowledge gaps were filled in and misconceptions were corrected, and the degree to which misconceptions have persisted despite exposure to correct conceptions during the unit.

Procedures

As the first step in a program of research that eventually will encompass the full K-5 range, we have begun interviewing at the fifth-grade level. Fifth graders are generally more knowledgeable and easier to interview than younger students. However, they usually have not been exposed to history as a discipline or to sustained, chronologically organized instruction in history prior to their fifth-grade U.S. history course. They possess bits and pieces of knowledge about the past (Native Americans, the Pilgrims and the first Thanksgiving, Columbus, presidents and other famous Americans, and smatterings of state history), but they usually have not yet studied systematic, chronological history. Thus, although they are relatively sophisticated learners, fifth graders usually enter their U.S. history course with very little systematic prior knowledge.

The students that we have been interviewing are typical in this respect. Their school district's curriculum guidelines and adopted elementary social studies series both follow the expanding communities framework that focuses on the self in kindergarten, the family in first grade, the neighborhood in second grade, the community in third grade, the state and region in fourth grade, and the United States in fifth grade. The teachers do not always rely heavily on the adopted textbooks and accompanying worksheets and activities suggestions, but they do follow the district guidelines and teach the topics traditionally emphasized within the expanding communities framework that has been called the de facto national curriculum in elementary social studies (Naylor & Diem, 1987).

The interviewees are a stratified sample of fifth graders who attend an elementary school located in a working-class/lower middle-class suburb of Lansing, Michigan. All of the students are white, as are the vast majority of

their classmates. The sample includes five boys and five girls. Within each gender group there are two high achievers, two average achievers, and one low achiever, based on academic achievement in fourth grade. Because we could interview no more than 10 students due to resource limitations, we weighted the sample toward higher achievers in the expectation that this would yield more substantive responses.

Students were interviewed individually in quiet rooms outside of their classrooms. Interviews required 15-30 minutes. They were taperecorded and later transcribed for analysis, using pseudonyms to preserve the students' anonymity. This report focuses on a unit on the English colonies in America taught during the Winter of 1991. It was the fourth unit of the U.S. history course, following an introductory unit on history and the work of historians, a second unit on Native Americans, and a third unit on European discovery and exploration of North America. Findings from interviews conducted before and after the first unit are presented in Brophy, VanSledright, and Bredin (1991, in press a); findings from the second unit are presented in VanSledright, Brophy, and Bredin (1992); and findings from the third unit are presented in Brophy, VanSledright, and Bredin (1992).

In developing questions for the interviews, we focused on two overlapping sets of ideas: (1) the unit topics and associated key ideas traditionally taught in fifth-grade U.S. history courses, and (2) the major goals and key ideas emphasized by this particular fifth-grade teacher. Thus, although our primary interest was in seeing how representative students would respond to questions about commonly taught curriculum topics, we adapted the questions to the particular curriculum that these students would experience. The teacher's intended goals and content emphases were taken into account in selecting

questions to be included in the interview, and her knowledge of what transpired as the unit progressed was included in interpreting the findings.

The teacher's approach to teaching U.S. history is noteworthy for her use of children's literature and her own storytelling and explanations, rather than a textbook, as a major source of input to students; her emphasis on depth of development of key ideas rather than breadth of coverage in selecting and representing content; her use of several devices designed to help students focus on key ideas and structure their learning around them (e.g., introducing and closing units with KWL exercises (see page 9); displaying key terms, organized within "people," "places," and "events" categories, on a history bulletin board; and creating, reviewing, and then posting story maps that summarize and connect the key details of important historical episodes); and her emphasis on cooperative learning activities and extended writing assignments over worksheets and short- answer tests. Her major social studies content goal for the year is to teach students about the establishment and development of the United States as a nation. In addition to providing information through stories and explanations, this includes keeping track of developments by locating them on timelines and maps.

The two previous units set the stage for the colonies unit by creating a historical context within which students could understand the colonizing of the New World. The unit on Native Americans taught that Native Americans have been living in the western hemisphere for at least 10,000 years. The students learned that Native Americans originally came from Asia, crossing over on what is now the Bering Straits, and eventually fanned out all across the Americas, differentiating into many tribal groups with different customs and cultures. These Native Americans communities were in place long before the first European explorers' ships began arriving from the east.

In the explorers' unit, the students learned that (a) while Native Americans were developing their societies in what was to become known as the New World, the Old World, consisting of the continents of Europe, Africa, and Asia, had developed trading activities that extended from the British Isles to China and Japan; (b) the Vikings had explored to the west and even reached North America, but they apparently did not realize that they had encountered an entire continent rather than just a few islands, and in any case, whatever they discovered did not motivate them to keep coming back; (c) improvements in ship-building and navigation eventually made ocean sailing an attractive alternative to overland transportation between western Europe and Asia; (d) however, the established routes involved long trips around Africa, and the western European nations were looking for shorter routes; (e) knowing that the world was round, many western Europeans deduced that "the Indies" might be reached more quickly by sailing westward; (f) this led Spain to commission Columbus (and thereafter several other western European nations to commission other explorers) to sail west and seek a shorter route to the Indies; (g) these explorers did reach land but not the expected Indies, and eventually it became clear that continents previously unknown to Europeans lay between Europe and the Far East; (h) based on the discoveries made by explorers sailing under their flags, several western European nations began claiming dominion over various parts of the New World, explored these areas more intensively, and began exploiting their resources and later colonizing them; and (h) eventually, most of North America was either colonized or controlled by England, France, or Spain.

This unit was taught prior to the build-up of media attention and the development of special instructional resources connected with the Columbian Quincentenary, so the content reflected a relatively traditional (i.e., Euro-centric) point of view. The emphasis was on exploration of what is now the

United States rather than on a more global "age of exploration." Much of the time was spent on stories about the adventures and discoveries of specific explorers, drawn from historical or biographical selections from children's literature or articles from Cobblestone magazine. The teacher frequently referred to the use of flags (sailing under flags, planting flags) to help students understand that most explorers sailed and claimed land on behalf of the nations who sponsored their expeditions.

The colonial unit picked up the thread of the story of the establishment of the United States as a nation by noting that England eventually claimed and established 13 colonies on the eastern seaboard of North America. The students learned about the different kinds of people who came to settle in these colonies, the reasons why they came, and the conditions of life in the early settlements. In the next unit, they would learn about the development of tensions with England that ultimately led to the American Revolution.

However, the emphasis in the unit was not so much on the forward march of history as it was on the conditions of everyday life during the colonial period. Students learned about the first settlements (Roanoke Island, Jamestown, Plymouth) and the difficulties endured in establishing them. They also learned about everyday life in the colonies and about economic and social changes that occurred as the colonies developed, including the introduction of slavery (especially on southern plantations). The teacher wanted students to appreciate the powerful motives and willingness to take risks that led people to emigrate to the New World, the surprisingly small size of their ships and the cramped conditions they endured in them (and the even worse conditions endured in the slave ships), the enormity of the task and the many obstacles facing those who established the first settlements, the relatively primitive conditions of

everyday life at the time, the heavy dependence of the early colonists on hand tools and their own labor for meeting their most basic needs, and so on.

There was coverage of major events such as the Mayflower Compact and there were map activities to reinforce awareness of the locations of early settlements and colonies, but much of the instruction and many of the activities were built around diaries, artifacts, and historically based children's literature designed to develop concrete and visualizable understandings of what life in colonial times was like. One book that received particular emphasis was entitled Sarah Morton's Day (by Kate Waters, published in 1989 by Scholastic, New York). This is a fictional but fact-based account of a day in the life of a nine-year-old girl living in Plymouth Plantation in 1627. The story and illustrations provide a great deal of information about the lives of both adults and children in the early years in that colony. For more detailed information about this teacher and her approach to teaching about the English colonies in America, see Brophy (1990, 1992).

KWL Findings

We begin our presentation of findings with the KWL data collected at the beginning and end of the unit. KWL is a technique, based on schema-theoretic views of reading comprehension processes, for promoting learning by helping learners to retrieve relevant background knowledge and learn with metacognitive awareness of purpose and accomplishment (Ogle, 1986). Learners fill out KWL sheets in two steps. As they are about to begin study of a topic, they write down what they already Know (or think they know) about the topic and what they Want to learn about it. After completion of the unit, they describe what they Learned about the topic. The KWL exercise generates useful diagnostic and assessment information about students' knowledge of and interests in the topic

prior to instruction and about which aspects of what they learned are most salient to them following instruction.

For this unit, the KWL sheet instructed students to tell what they knew about colonies and what they wanted to learn about them. KWL data were available for 53 students, 29 boys and 24 girls (due to a semidepartmentalized teaching arrangement, this teacher taught U.S. history to other fifth graders besides those in her homeroom).

What the Students Knew About Colonies

Table 1 summarizes key features of the students' responses to the first section of the KWL sheet, on which they stated what they Knew (or thought they knew) about colonies. The categories in the table (and in subsequent tables) were developed post facto based on obtained student responses; no attempt was made to code the data using categories developed in advance.

About half (27) of the students were unable to report anything that they knew about colonies. Substantive responses were recorded by the other 26 students. There was a notable gender difference in this regard: Substantive responses were recorded by 18 of the 29 boys but by only 8 of the 24 girls.

Only one student supplied a reasonably specific and correct definition of a colony ("an area of land claimed by a country"). However, the other 25 substantive responses were mostly accurate as far as they went. Fourteen students described a colony either as a group of people or as a village or small settlement. Another eight students mentioned some combination of the facts that the original colonies became the first 13 states, that they were located on the eastern seaboard, or that they were settled by Pilgrims or people from England. However, none of these responses mentioned the relationship between the colony and the mother country. The following are representative responses.

Table 1

What Students Said They Knew About Colonies
Prior to the Unit

	Boys (N = 29)	Girls (N = 24)	Total (N = 53)
Don't know/no response	11	16	27
Group of people, village, small settlement	9	5	14
Eastern seaboard, first 13 states, Pilgrims, English	5	3	8
Founded by explorers, first people to live here	2	0	2
Big piece of land	1	0	1
An area of land claimed by a country	1	0	1
	29	24	53

Boys

There were different colonies. The Pilgrims were from the colonies. The first 13 states were called colonies.

Explorers came over and made colonies.

All I know is that colonies was where people first lived.

Colonies are groups of people who are making settlements.

Indian houses in a group were colonies.

I know that a colony is an area of land claimed by a country.

There were 13 colonies by the Atlantic Ocean.

There were seven of them. People in the colonies came from England. There were groups of people. A colony was like a region. George Washington was in one of the colonies. Many people live in colonies.

Girls

I know that there are groups. People made them. They are history.

A colony is like a village with a lot of people living in it.

A colony is a village that is going to get bigger.

Englishmen were in the English colonies.

Not much. The Pilgrims lived in a colony.

There were 13. America fought England for them. The Pilgrims settled in them. They were along the east coast of the U.S.A.

I know that colonies are a group of people that are the same in some way. Like an example of a colony is a big family.

For the most part, what the students knew (or thought they knew) about colonies prior to the unit was limited but not distorted. One student thought that the colonies were Indian villages and another thought that each colony had its own flag and fleet of ships. The former idea is a misconception, but one that seemed likely to be changed easily. The latter notion is not exactly accurate, but neither is it a significant misconception.

The data indicate that most students entered this unit with little knowledge about the colonies. The teacher reports that this is typical, and KWL data obtained on 73 students taught by the same teacher the previous year bear out this expectation (Brophy, 1990). In that data set, 51 of the 73 students were unable to provide a substantive response when asked what they knew about colonies, and only one supplied a specifically correct response ("It's a country that another country rules"). The remaining responses were similar to those reported here, except that four students confused the colonies with the continents ("There are seven colonies in the world--they are land."). This same confusion probably explains the fact that 1 of the 53 students in the current study stated that there were seven colonies, and it may explain another student's statement that "The colonies are a big piece of land."

What the Students Wanted to Learn

Table 2 summarizes students' responses to the second part of the KWL sheet, in which they stated what they Wanted to learn about colonies. One student said that he didn't know what he wanted to learn, and another 15 said only that they wanted to learn "everything" or "all about" colonies. The other 37 students among them recorded a total of 74 questions or comments about what they wanted to learn.

At least 17 of the questions indicated complete unfamiliarity with the term "colonies" ("What are colonies?"). At least two students (the ones who asked "Who are they?") thought that the term "colonies" referred to people rather than to settlements. For these students, the term "colonies" was akin to terms such as "Pilgrims" or "Indians."

However, most of the students' questions were about colonies or the people who founded and lived in them, indicating that the students had at least

Table 2

What Students Said They Wanted to Learn About Colonies

	Boys (N = 29)	Girls (N = 24)	Total (N = 53)
Vague Generic Responses			
Don't know/no response	1	0	1
Everything/all I can learn	7	8	15
Responses Indicating Unfamiliarity With the Term "Colonies"			
What are/were colonies?	5	7	12
Who are they?	1	1	2
Are they places that people live?	0	1	1
What do they have to do with explorers?	0	1	1
What was famous about them?	1	0	1
	7	10	17
Questions About the People Who Founded/ Lived in the Colonies			
Who were the people/where did they come from?	3	2	5
What were the people like?	3	0	3
What language did they speak?	1	0	1
Who were their leaders?	1	1	2
Why did they come/start a colony?	2	3	5
How did people know about the colonies? (i.e., How did they learn of the existence of colonies as a place to move to?)	0	1	1
When did they come?	1	0	1
How did they start the colonies?	2	2	4
What was life like in the colonies?	2	1	3
What were their houses like?	1	0	1
What was their habitat?	0	1	1
Did they have wars with each other?	1	0	1
How did they make peace with the Indians?	1	0	1
	18	11	29
Questions About Colonies			
Where were the colonies?	2	3	5
How many colonies were there?	2	4	6
How big were they/how many people?	3	0	3
Which was the first colony?	2	1	3
Which was the biggest colony?	1	0	1
How long did the colonies last?	1	0	1
Why are there no colonies now?	0	1	1
Why were they called colonies?	3	0	3
Who owned/claimed the colonies?	1	2	3
	15	11	26

Table 2 (cont'd.)

	Boys (N = 29)	Girls (N = 24)	Total (N = 53)
Other Comments			
I would like to see some of the colonies long ago	0	1	1
About the War of 1812 and who signed the Declaration of Independence	0	1	1

a general idea (or accurate hunch) about the meaning of the term. Most of the questions focused on descriptive facts, but a few called for explanations. Questions were distributed over quite a range of issues. Many were unique to individual students, although four or more students asked how many colonies there were, where they were located, where the founders had come from, and how they started the colonies. The gist of what most students said is reflected in the categories in Table 2. The following responses are quoted because they contain interesting insights, elaborations, or misconceptions.

Boys

> What it was like living in the colonies. Was there any famous things in the colonies?
>
> Who are they? And why are they named that?
>
> Who are the leaders of the colonies? Why they made colonies? Did they have wars with each other? Did they have leaders? How long did they stay as colonies? What they lived in?
>
> I want to know where they were, what they did, how they did it, when they were here, what were the people like, and what countries they came from.

Girls

> I want to know what they are and what they have to do with explorers and are they places people live?
>
> I want to know how people knew about the colonies. How come they came there. What a colony is like and is it a nice place to live and why we don't have them anymore.
>
> What are they? Were there 50 of them?

Data on the 73 students studied the previous year yielded similar patterns. Most students either said "everything" or listed basic general questions (What are they? Where are they located? How big are they?). A few students thought that colonies were people and asked questions that reflected this assumption (Where did they live? What did they do for a living?).

What the Students Reported Learning

At the completion of the unit, the KWL sheets were returned to the students so they could report what they had Learned. These responses are summarized in Table 3. These data were available for 45 students, not 53, because 4 boys and 4 girls were absent.

As they wrote their L responses, most students used material posted along the walls of the room as cues to the selection and organization of content. The teacher had posted several key terms for the unit (e.g., Roanoke, Jamestown, Plymouth, John White, John Smith, William Bradford) on her social studies bulletin board at the back of the room, and other unit-related materials (books, artwork and other activity products) were observable by students who chose to scan the room for cues.

About half (23) of the students mentioned one or more things that they had learned about colonies in general: that there were 13 colonies, that colonies were small villages or settlements, that they were owned or governed by other countries, that they had their own leaders or form of government, or that the people had come from "another country" or from England. Ten students mentioned reasons why people came to the colonies. Most of these mentioned freedom and/or gold.

Twenty-three students also commented about hardships and problems in the first colonies, especially hostile Indians, lack of fresh water, cold winters, limited food or starvation, and people refusing to do necessary work because they were obsessed with finding gold. Some of the comments referred specifically to particular colonies (especially the first winter at Jamestown), but most of them generalized across all of the early colonies and some of them conflated elements that had been taught about different colonies. What came through to most of the students was not the specific hardships endured at

Table 3 .

What the Students Said That They Had Learned About Colonies?

	Boys (N = 25)	Girls (N = 20)	Total (N = 45)
Statements About Colonies in General	14[a]	9	23
There were 13 colonies/many colonies	9	4	13
They were owned/governed by other countries	3	2	5
Colonies had leaders/government/laws	3	2	5
Colonies were villages/settlements	2	4	6
They were groups of settlers from another country	4	0	4
The people came from England	2	3	5
Indians helped them with food, advice	1	1	2
I learned where they were located	1	1	2
Reasons People Came to the Colonies	6	4	10
To find gold or riches	3	4	7
To find freedom	3	4	7
Comments About Hardships and Problems in the First Colonies	12	11	23
Disease	0	1	1
Inadequate clothing	1	2	3
Lack of fresh water	4	2	6
Hostile Indians	6	3	9
Cold/frostbite	2	3	5
Starvation	2	3	5
People refusing to work	2	2	4
Men had to come first and establish the colony, then families came later	2	0	2
Cramped conditions, frequent disease and death on the trip to America	0	2	2
Comments on the Hardships Faced by Children in Puritan Colonies	5	7	12
Had to get up early, work all day	2	5	7
Couldn't talk unless first addressed by adults	3	5	8
Had to eat standing up while adults sat	4	4	8
Parents strict/prone to punish	2	0	2
Had to wear a "big rag" while you ate	1	0	1
Few toys or interesting things to do	1	3	4
Had to sleep on straw-filled pillow cases	0	3	3

Table 3 (cont'd.)

	Boys (N = 25)	Girls (N = 20)	Total (N = 45)
Comments About the Jamestown Colony	17	11	28
Founded 1607/first colony to survive	7	1	8
John Smith was leader	8	4	12
Still exists today	1	0	1
Pocahontas helped colony/saved Smith's life	3	3	6
House of Burgesses was government	1	3	4
"No work, no eat" rule	1	1	2
Owned by King James	1	0	1
King James sent the colonists to find riches for him	1	4	5
Named after King James	1	2	3
Comments About the Plymouth Colony	14	9	23
Founded 1620	1	0	1
William Bradford was leader	4	3	7
Spelled "Plimoth"	1	0	1
Three ships were the Godspeed, Susan Constant, and Discovery	3	1	4
Helped by Squanto and Samoset	1	3	4
Mayflower Compact was government	3	4	7
Pilgrims were headed for Jamestown but were blown off course	0	3	3
Comments About the Roanoke Colony	9	10	19
Lost/disappeared/mystery	6	8	14
John White was leader/captain	5	3	8
First colony in America	1	0	1
Croatoan/John White's search	2	5	7
Virginia Dare as first English baby	1	2	3
Comments About Slavery	7	11	18
Slaves brought over from Africa in crowded slave ships	4	5	9
Slaves had to work hard, were treated cruelly	4	7	11
Poor housing, clothing	0	2	2
Other Comments			
Tobacco became an important crop	2	0	2

Table 3 (cont'd.)	Boys (N = 25)	Girls (N = 20)	Total (N = 45)
People Mentioned by Name			
John White	6	4	10
John Smith	8	7	15
William Bradford	4	4	8
Pocahontas	3	5	8
Phyllis Weatby (Wheatley)	1	0	1
King James	3	4	7
Virginia Dare	1	2	3
Squanto	1	4	5
Samoset	1	2	3
Sarah Morton	1	7	8

[a]The totals for major categories are the numbers of different students who responded in the category. Subcategory sums usually exceed these totals because some students made multiple responses tallied in more than one subcategory.

particular colonies, but the more general notion that the first colonies had hard times at first, especially during the winters, until they "made friends" with local Indians and learned to grow their own food.

In addition to or instead of describing hardships and problems experienced in the early colonies in general, 12 students focused on the hardships faced by children in the Puritan colonies. These included having to get up early and work all day, not being allowed to speak to adults unless addressed first, having to eat standing up while the adults sat at the table, having few toys or interesting things to do for recreation, having to sleep on straw-filled mats instead of beds, and domination by strict parents. Most of these ideas were acquired from the book Sarah Morton's Day that depicted a day in the life of a girl at Plymouth Plantation.

Many of the students' statements about what they had learned were not comments about colonies in general but statements specific to Jamestown, Plymouth, or Roanoke Island. Twenty-eight students supplied information about Jamestown: that John Smith was the leader, that it was founded in 1607 or was the first colony to survive, that Pocahontas helped the colony or saved Smith's life, that it was founded on the orders of and/or named after King James, or that its government was called the House of Burgesses. Twenty-three students made statements about the Plymouth colony: that William Bradford was the leader, that it was governed by the Mayflower Compact, that Squanto and Samoset helped the colony become established, and that settlers came on three ships named the Godspeed, the Susan Constant, and the Discovery. Nineteen students made statements about Roanoke island: that the colony had mysteriously disappeared, that John White was the leader, that he searched for it upon his return but could only find the word "Croatoan" carved on a tree, and that Virginia Dare was the first English baby born in the New World.

Most of the individual names that appeared in the students' statements were mentioned in the context of relating events at one or more of these first three colonies. However, some students simply named people without saying anything else about them and some mixed the people up (especially John White and John Smith).

The remaining major category of student responses was slavery, which was mentioned by 18 students. All of these responses focused on the horrors of slavery: the crowded conditions of the slave ships, hard work, cruel treatment, or poor housing and clothing.

Finally, two students mentioned that tobacco became an important crop in the New World and another 14 students reported various unique observations. The unique observations were the following: Not every colony had a fleet of ships; most colonies are started where a country puts their flag on a piece of land; some are still around and are states with the same names; colonists made tin lanterns and corn bread; there were famous things in colonies like Phyllis Weatby [Wheatley]; some people who came to America were searching for the cities of gold; Maine was called Massachusetts back then; Indians don't get along with people and might even kill them; the Pilgrims' village was dull and boring; the slaves came here on their own originally but then were taken over by white men; Sarah Morton and her friend Elizabeth played with a game called a knicker box; most of the time people looking for something did not find it; a set of comments and questions about slavery (quoted below); and the statement that "I'm glad that people are not slaves anymore."

Except for a few of these unique observations and a few instances of confusion or misconception, the students' statements of what they had learned in the unit reflected what the teacher had taught. Most of the confusions involved mixing up John Smith with John White or mixing up events that occurred

at Jamestown with events that occurred at Plymouth. Other confusions included a reference to Captain "James" White as the leader of Roanoke Island, the statement that they "named Jamestown after the leader John Smith," that people were sent by "King Jamestown," and that "the slaves came here and were taken over by white men." The last student thought that the slaves originally had come to the New World voluntarily but were enslaved after they got here.

Our interviews the previous year had revealed many more misconceptions about slavery. Many of those students thought that the slaves were white people from Europe rather than black people from Africa and/or that slavery involved voluntary acceptance of low-paying and undesirable work (for lack of better opportunities), without understanding that it involved kidnapping and forced labor (Brophy, 1990). In teaching the unit this time, the teacher spent more time on slavery and addressed those misconceptions more directly, with highly successful results.

There was more similarity than difference between the responses of the boys and of the girls. However, the boys were relatively more likely to make statements about the colonies in general and to recount information about Jamestown, Plymouth, or Roanoke Island, whereas the girls were relatively more likely to talk about hardships and problems faced in the early colonies (especially by children), to talk about slavery, and to mention female individuals (Pocahontas, Virginia Dare, and especially, Sarah Morton). Representative examples of verbatim responses are as follows.

Boys

> I learned that the 13 colonies were England's. Not every colony had a fleet of ships. One colony disappeared. Every colony had a leader. People came to the colonies for different reasons. Each colony had many different problems which were disease, not the right clothes, salt water, bad Indians, frostbite, people that did not work, and starvation. The leader of the Roanoke colony was John White. The leader of Jamestown was John Smith. The leader of

Plymouth was William Bradford. The way the Pilgrims spelled Plymouth was P-l-i-m-o-u-t-h.

I learned why they came. They came for gold. Some people came for religious freedom. There was an island called Roanoke Island. It was found but they ran out of supplies, so the captain went back to get supplies. When he came back there was no one in sight, not even one person, so John White the captain said, "Maybe they went to the other side of the island." So they went over to look, but no one was there. He said, "Maybe they went to another island." So they went to another island, but no one was there and then John saw something on a tree that said "Croatoan," and on another tree he saw "Croa."

The kids could not do very much. They could not sit at the table or talk unless spoken to. I learned about England's King James and the history of America. I also learned why people came to America and what it was like here. I learned about slaves, how they got here, and how they acted and how they were treated.

Girls

I learned that they are part of a country that is separated from another part. I learned that some colonies have mysteries to them like Roanoke Island. I learned about slavery, how some slavemasters were mean and cut their heads off if they do something. That slaves had to work all day and only on special days they would get to have a gathering with their family and tell stories. I learned about Jamestown, where they were dying and getting killed by Indians and their leader left Jamestown. They had laws and named Jamestown after the leader John Smith.

I learned that Jamestown was the first colony. That Roanoke disappeared and left a message on a tree. I learned that being a Pilgrim isn't easy, that kids had to stand at the table and that you were not allowed to talk for the whole day. The Pilgrims came over for freedom.

I learned that the colonies were ruled by other countries like Spain. Sarah Morton had to do a lot of chores and had very little breaks. Sarah couldn't talk without her parents talking first. Sarah's parents sat at the table and she had to stand up. Sarah had a friend and her name was Elizabeth. Sarah and Elizabeth played with a knicker box.

A few other responses are worth quoting because they contain more personalized comments that reflect interesting individual perspectives.

Boys

I learned a lot about how Jamestown got its name. Indians were involved. I also learned how women came later as colonies grew. I

learned that Indians don't get along with people. They might even kill them.

I learned that living back then wasn't easy. I'm glad I wasn't a kid back then or I couldn't talk without being talked to. You had to get up at 4:00 a.m., you had to stand up eating if you were a kid, if you talked without being talked to you would get the stick. You had to wear a big rag over your shoulder when you ate. So basically what I am saying was, life then was a nightmare come true.

Girls

Slavery is very cruel even mostly to blacks. I say this because I like black people. Some are just like white people. What I'm trying to say is what's wrong with blacks? Why were they slaves? Why did the whites fight with the blacks? I want to know?

Most of the time, people are looking for something and don't find it. For example, the Pilgrims were looking for Jamestown but they landed at a different place and the people in Jamestown were looking for gold but they didn't find gold but they started a colony. They worked very hard and didn't have a soft bed and children were used like slaves. Many people died on the way to the place and some people died after. They had a very hard life. I'm glad that it paid off! Slaves were black and most people mistreated them like when they shipped slaves they packed them right next to each other. It always stunk because of the sweat that stinks and I'm glad to see that people are not slaves anymore!!

Students' responses to the L part of the KWL exercise cannot be used with much confidence as measures of how much they learned during the unit, because so many of them relied so heavily on posted key words and other cues in the classroom environment as they wrote their responses. However, these responses at least suggest that the students' knowledge about the establishment of English colonies in America had developed considerably beyond what they remembered about the first Thanksgiving as they began the unit. Many of the responses suggest that the teacher was successful in personalizing history and "making it come alive" for the students (Howard & Mendenhall, 1982). The fact that so many of the responses recounted events from Sarah Morton's Day and from stories that the teacher told the children underscores the power of narrative structures for capturing students' interest and helping them to remember

factual details (Egan, 1988). The gender differences indicate that girls are especially likely to notice and remember content dealing with females or with the details of everyday family living. Similar trends have appeared in our data from other curriculum units.

Interview Findings

Having described the responses of two entire classes of students to the KWL instrument, we now turn to the findings from the interviewing of the subsample of 10 students. Responses to various pre- and postunit questions will be presented in groups arranged to contrast the students' entry-level knowledge and thinking with their knowledge and thinking after experience with the unit. Highlights of the findings are shown in Table 4, in which the students are grouped by gender, and within gender by achievement level. Jason, Tim, Teri, and Sue were high achievers; Mark, Brad, Helen, and Kay were average achievers; and Ned and Rita were low achievers. (Students' names are pseudonyms.)

Initial Questions on Colonies in General

The first five questions in each interview addressed general aspects of the establishment of European settlements in the New World and the notion of a colony and its relationship to the mother country.

> *Question #1. As Europeans began to learn about the New World, some of them started to come over not just to explore but to stay and live here. Why was that? Who were these people and why did they come to live in the New World?*

Like Questions #6, #16, and #17, Question #1 addressed more than one issue. In this case, there were two separate issues: Who were the people who came and why did they come? For these multi-issue questions, the interviewer first stated the entire question and then went back over its parts, allowing

Table 4

Summary of Student's Responses to Pre- and Postunit Questions

	Jason	Tim	Mark	Brad	Wed	Teri	Sue	Helen	Kay	Rita	Boys	Girls	Total
Pre-Question #1a. Who were the first Europeans to live in the New World?													
Don't know	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	2	2	4
People from the countries that sent explorers	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	2	3
The explorers themselves	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	1	3
											5	5	10
Post-Question #1a. Who were the first Europeans to live in the New World?													
Did not address this issue	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	2	2	4
Don't know	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
Europeans/English	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	2
John Smith, John White, William Bradford	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	2
											5	5	10
Pre-Question #1b. Why did they come?													
They wanted to see, explore the new lands	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	4	1	5
Riches, gold	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Natural resources, raw materials	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	2
Europe was overcrowded	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	2
Fountain of Youth	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Freedom from slavery	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1
											8	5	13

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Table 3 (cont'd.)

	Jason	Tim	Mark	Brad	Ned	Teri	Sue	Helen	Kay	Rita	Boys	Girls	Total
Post-Question #1b. Why did they come?													
They wanted to see, explore new lands	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	2
Riches, gold, fur	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	2	3	5
Natural resources, raw materials	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Europe was overcrowded	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	2	3
Freedom from slavery	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1
Freedom from king's rules/ religious freedom	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	4	5
Claim the land (for self or king)	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	1	3
											8	12	20
Pre-Question #2. What are colonies?													
Don't know	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	3	3	6
Community (government unspecified)	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	2	3
Self-governing	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Owned or ruled by another country	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
											5	5	10
Post-Question #2. What are colonies?													
Don't know	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Community (government unspecified)	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	2	2	4
Self-governing	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	2
Owned or ruled by another country	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	2	2	4
											5	5	10

Table 4 (cont'd.)

	Jason	Tim	Mark	Brad	Ned	Teri	Sue	Helen	Kay	Rita	Boys	Girls	Total
Pre-Question #3. Why did the colonies belong to England?													
The English first explored, claimed the land	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	3	5	8
Post-Question #3. Why did the colonies belong to England?													
The English first explored, claimed the land	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	5	3	8
Pre-Question #4. How could Europeans claim the Indians' land?													
Europeans didn't know that the Indians were there or that the land belonged to them	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Europeans took it by force	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Europeans were greedy, arrogant, didn't respect Indians	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	2	3
Indians didn't realize that they had discovered the land or that they could claim ownership of it	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	2	3
Indians didn't realize what the Europeans were doing until it was too late	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	3	3
											5	7	12

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Table 4 (cont'd.)

	Jason	Tim	Mark	Brad	Ned	Teri	Sue	Helen	Kay	Rita	Boys	Girls	Total
Post-Question #4. How could Europeans claim the Indians' land?													
Europeans didn't know that the Indians were there or that the land belonged to them	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Europeans took it by force	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	2	3	5
Europeans were greedy, arrogant, didn't respect Indians	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	3	4
Indians didn't realize that they had discovered the land or that they could claim ownership of it	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	2
Indians didn't realize what the Europeans were doing until it was too late	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1
Indians ceded land when they signed treaties	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
											7	9	16
Pre-Question #5. Why did England want to have colonies?													
Don't know	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	3
Enhance power, wealth, prestige	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	2	3	5
Relieve overcrowding/ accommodate larger population	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	2
											5	5	10

Table 4 (cont'd.)

	Jason	Tim	Mark	Brad	Ned	Teri	Sue	Helen	Kay	Rita	Boys	Girls	Total
Post-Question #5. Why did England want to have colonies?													
Don't know	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Enhance power, wealth, prestige	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	4	2	6
Relieve overcrowding/ accommodate larger population	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	2	3
											5	5	10
Pre-Question #6a. What were the names of the early colonies?													
Mentions specific names	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Post-Question #6a. What were the names of the early colonies?													
Mentions specific names	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	5	4	9
Jamestown, Plymouth, and/or Roanoke Island	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	5	3	8
Virginia, Massachusetts, etc.	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	3	4	7
New England, middle, and southern colonies	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Pre-Question #6b. What can you tell me about these early colonies?													
Supplies one or more facts (beyond names)	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Post-Question #6b. What can you tell me about these early colonies?													
Supplies one or more facts (beyond names)	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	2	3	5

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Table 4 (cont'd.)

	Jason	Tim	Mark	Brad	Ned	Teri	Sue	Helen	Kay	Rita	Boys	Girls	Total
Pre-Question #7. What do you know about Roanoke Island?													
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Post-Question #7. What do you know about Roanoke Island?													
Lost/disappeared/mystery	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	5	5	10
John White was leader	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	3	5	8
Croatoan/search for clues	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	3	3	6
Virginia Dare	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	4	4
											11	17	28
Pre-Question #8. What do you know about Jamestown?													
Supplies one or more facts	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1
Post-Question #8. What do you know about Jamestown?													
John Smith was leader	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	1	3
It was the first colony to survive	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Named after King James	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	3	3	6
Governed by House of Burgesses	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
Helped by Pocahontas	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	2	3
Other	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	5	4	9
											14	11	25

Table 4 (cont'd.)

	Jason	Tim	Mark	Brad	Ned	Teri	Sue	Helen	Kay	Rita	Boys	Girls	Total
Pre-Question #9/11a. What do you know about Plymouth?													
Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	3	4	7
First Thanksgiving was there	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
It's in Massachusetts	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
											6	4	10
Post-Question #9/11a. What do you know about Plymouth?													
Pilgrims landed there/ founded Plymouth	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	4	4	8
First Thanksgiving was there	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
It's in Massachusetts	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	2
Pilgrims came for religious freedom	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	3	3	6
William Bradford was leader	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	1	3
Mayflower Compact	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	2
Their ship blew off course toward Jamestown	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	1	3
Other	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	3	4
											15	14	29
Pre-Question #10. What kinds of people came to the colonies?													
Don't know/incorrect guesses	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	4	4	8
People who wanted to live somewhere else	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Pilgrims who wanted to escape the king	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
											5	5	10

Table 4 (cont'd.)

	Jason	Tim	Mark	Brad	Ned	Teri	Sue	Helen	Kay	Rita	Boys	Girls	Total
Post-Question #10. What kinds of people came to the colonies?													
Seeking gold, riches	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	5	2	7
Seeking land	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	2	2	4
Seeking religious freedom	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	3	4	7
Build a better life	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
Escape overcrowding	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1
											10	10	20
Pre-Question #11b. Why did the Pilgrims leave England?													
Don't know	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	4	5
Escape mean king	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3
Seek religious freedom	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1
Seek gold, riches	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
											5	5	10
Post-Question #11b. Why did the Pilgrims leave England?													
Don't know	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
Seek religious freedom	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	4	4	8
											5	5	10
Pre-Question #12. Compare life in the colonies versus life in England.													
Wilderness versus developed houses, roads	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	2	2	4
No stores where you could just buy what you needed	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1

Table 4 (cont'd.)

	Jason	Tim	Mark	Brad	Ned	Teri	Sue	Helen	Kay	Rita	Boys	Girls	Total
Unfamiliar versus familiar setting, routines	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	2
Few, isolated people versus dense population	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	3
Freedom versus submission to king	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Other	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	3
											10	5	15
Post-Question #12. Compare life in the colonies versus in England.													
Wilderness versus developed houses, roads	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	1	3
No stores where you could just buy what you needed	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	3	4	7
Unfamiliar versus familiar settings, routines	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1
Few, isolated people versus dense population	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Freedom versus submission to king	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	3	2	5
Other	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	3	2	5
											12	10	22
Pre-Question #13. Why were colonies located near water?													
People traveled by boat then	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	3	1	4
You need water to drink	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	1	3
Easy fishing, swimming	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	2
											6	3	9

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Table 4 (cont'd.)

	Jason	Tim	Mark	Brad	Ned	Teri	Sue	Helen	Kay	Rita	Boys	Girls	Total
Post-Question #13. Why were colonies located near water?													
People traveled by boat then	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	3	2	5
You need water to drink	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	3	4
Easy fishing, swimming	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
So you could find your way home easily (not get lost in the woods)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
So you could see resupply ships coming	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Easy hunting (of animals who drink in streams)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1
											6	7	13
Pre-Question #14. Compare life on frontier versus coast.													
Conflict with Indians on frontier	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
More animals on frontier	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Simple life on frontier	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	2
Lonely, isolated on frontier	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	2
Quiet, uncrowded on frontier	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	2
											4	4	8
Post-Question #14. Compare life on frontier versus coast.													
Conflict with Indians on frontier	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	3	1	4
More animals on frontier	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Less water on frontier	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
You had to build from scratch on frontier	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	1	3
No stores to purchase supplies on frontier	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	2	3
											9	4	13

Table 4 (cont'd.)

	Jason	Tim	Mark	Brad	Ned	Teri	Sue	Helen	Kay	Rita	Boys	Girls	Total
Pre-Question #15. Compare the northern, middle, and southern colonies.													
Southern colonies warmer than New England	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Post-Question #15. Compare the northern, middle, and southern colonies.													
Southern colonies warmer than New England	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	3	2	5
Pre-Question #16a. What is a slave?													
Forced to work against their wills	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	5	9
Owned and sold as property	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	2
Post-Question #16a. What is a slave?													
Forced to work against their wills	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	5	4	9
Owned and sold as property	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	4	3	7
Pre-Question #16b. Where were the slaves from?													
Don't know	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	3	4
Africa	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Europe or elsewhere	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	3	2	5
											5	5	10
Post-Question #16b. Where were the slaves from?													
Don't know	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Africa	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	5	3	8
Europe or elsewhere	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1
											5	5	10

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Table 4 (cont'd.)

	Jason	Tim	Mark	Brad	Ned	Teri	Sue	Helen	Kay	Rita	Boys	Girls	Total
Pre-Question #16c. How were slaves brought here?													
Describes slave ships	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Post-Question #16c. How were slaves brought here?													
Describes slave ships	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	2	3
Pre-Question 17a. Did colonies have laws/ government?													
Yes	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	2	3	5
No	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	2
Don't know	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	3
											5	5	10
Post-Question #17a. Did colonies have laws/ government?													
Yes	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	5	5	10
Pre-Question #17b. How were colonies governed?													
Authoritarian leaders imposed rules	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1
Democratic leader selection/ town meetings/voting	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	2
Post-Question #17b. How were colonies governed?													
Authoritarian leaders imposed rules	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	2	4	6
Democratic leader selection/ town meetings/voting	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	5	2	7
Mayflower Compact (Plymouth)	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	1	3
House of Burgesses (Jamestown)	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	3	2	5

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Table 4 (cont'd.)

	Jason	Tim	Mark	Brad	Ned	Teri	Sue	Helen	Kay	Rita	Boys	Girls	Total
Pre-Question #18. How did the colonies become the United States?													
Revolutionary War/Declaration of Independence	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	2
Post-Question #18. How did the colonies become the United States?													
Revolutionary War/Declaration of Independence	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	3	1	4

the student to respond to each issue separately. To simplify data presentation, these issues are numbered and treated separately both here and in Table 4.

Question #1a. Who were the first Europeans to come to live in the New World?

Prior to the unit, 4 of the 10 interviewees could not respond to this question, 3 said that the settlers were people from the countries that had sent explorers previously, and 3 said that the settlers were the explorers themselves. The latter 3 students obviously did not realize that more than 100 years elapsed between the initial exploration of what is now the eastern seaboard of the United States and its later colonization by the English. Similar timeline confusion has appeared in our interviews concerning the previous unit on European exploration of the New World (Brophy, VanSledright, & Bredin, 1992).

Following the unit, four students did not address the issue of who the first European settlers were and two others said that they did not know. Of the four students who gave substantive responses, two named Europeans generally and the other two named John White, John Smith, and William Bradford specifically. No one continued to believe that the settlers were the original explorers themselves.

Four students were never directly pressed to identify the first European settlers because during the postunit interview, both the interviewer and the students themselves focused on the reasons why these people came in addressing this question. These four students' answers to subsequent questions indicated that they understood that the first settlers had come from western European countries (from England, in the case of the English colonies). With this in

mind, it can be said that the responses to the first question showed considerable improvement from before to after the unit.

Question 1b. Why did they come?

Nine students responded to this question prior to the unit, suggesting a total of 13 reasons. Five students suggested that the people simply wanted to see and explore the new lands. Reasons mentioned by two students each included a desire to acquire gold or riches, a desire to acquire natural resources (minerals, trees), and a desire to escape overcrowding in Europe. Finally, one student thought that some came to seek the Fountain of Youth and another thought that the first European immigrants were slaves who sought freedom from their slavery. Some of these responses (the search for riches, natural resources, or the Fountain of Youth) reflected information that the students had learned in the previous unit on explorers. Others were inferences that they had developed on their own (overcrowding in Europe, adventurers eager to explore newly discovered lands). Helen's belief that the Europeans were slaves in Europe was a longstanding one that had been verbalized several times in previous interviews.

> *Tim*: Because it was new and there was a lot of gold you could find and people hadn't found out a lot about it yet, so they'll try to explore more and because it's just new and they want to see what it's like. [Who were the people who came over?] Spain, England, and France.
>
> *Brad:* There was more land here and more, I forgot what it was called--minerals they get from the ground, natural resources. I'm pretty sure that's why. And the Indians would tell some stories and told an explorer from Spain about the Fountain of Youth in Florida. That might be part of the reason why they came.
>
> *Ned:* Because they discovered the new land and they wanted to see how it was. [Who were they?] I don't know.
>
> *Helen:* Well, in Europe, they were slaves for the king and they thought if they went to a New World where the Indians were, they wouldn't be slaves anymore. They thought, "You want to be free, come over to America."

Kay: They wanted somewhere new to be and it wouldn't be as crowded. It was new and more things were there, like trees and stuff to make houses with.

Rita: Because it was getting overpopulated in the lands that the explorers were from. The king said, "Your half go over to the new land and another half will stay here."

Following the unit, emphasis had shifted from a desire merely to explore new lands to a desire to acquire riches, acquire land, or achieve religious freedom. In addition or instead, three students suggested that Europe was overcrowded and Helen persisted in her belief that the immigrants were escaping slavery. The latter responses are part of a larger pattern seen in several of our interviews indicating that these fifth graders did not know much about the conditions of life in Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries.

Tim: Because there was new land and they just wanted to see what was there and nobody was there except the Indians. [Any special things here that they were after?] Maybe gold or stuff like that that was valuable. [Who were these people?] The Europeans. [Can you be more specific?] English. [Any others?] French and Spanish, but they didn't live in the colonies. [Do you know why they came?] Because King George or King James started to send them over here because they found new land and they wanted England to have all that land.

Brad: There was new land here and they wanted the land and resources. [Why couldn't they find them in Europe?] People had been there for a long time and they've got most of the things from over there.

Ned: They wanted to get away from the king. [Were there any other things they wanted to get?] Gold.

Sue: Because they were exploring the new land and they wanted to see what was on the new land and see if there is anything valuable. They came here to live and make colonies for the kings of their country. [Why?] So the king would have more land. [Why would that be good for the king?] Because the more land you have, the richer you are. [Who were some of these people who came?] John Smith, William Bradford, John White. [They were from what country?] England.

Helen: In Europe, it was so crowded people had to move to another land. They said "Well this land's better, so move over here." So more people moved over here. Finally, that started everywhere and

that's how we became the United States. [Any other reasons they wanted to come here?] Freedom from slavery and some wanted to come over here for religious rights.

Kay: They were after gold and some were after religious freedom. [Any other reasons?] Fur trading.

Rita: Because they didn't want to live under the king's rules. [Any other reasons?] it was too crowded over there.

Question #2. Many of the people who came over lived in colonies. What does that mean? What are colonies?

Prior to the unit, six students could not respond to this question, three said that colonies were villages or settlements, and one said that they were states. None mentioned anything about colonies being owned or governed by another country.

Following the unit, all 10 students made substantive responses to this question. Four said that colonies were communities (villages, settlements, cities) but did not say anything about how they were governed. Two students described colonies as self-governing independent states or nations. Finally, 4 students described colonies as communities that were owned or ruled by another nation (or its king). Thus, like the K and L responses to the KWL instrument, the pre- and postunit responses to Question #2 indicated considerable growth in the students' knowledge about colonies. All of the students now knew that colonies were groups of people living in the New World, although fewer than half of them understood that these communities were governed by the European nations that sponsored their establishment.

Several students mentioned the sizes of colonies, with the majority suggesting that they were small villages or cities. This is one of several indications in our data that study of the early colonies at Roanoke Island, Jamestown, and Plymouth initially leads students to think of colonies as very small settlements (probably surrounded by stockades). This image of colonies

that is based on the early isolated settlements sometimes persists in certain students' later learning about developments between 1607 and 1776. Some of these students do not appreciate the fact that, by the latter date, colonies had grown to become large and populous precursors to today's eastern seaboard states.

Tim: It's sort of like a state or group of people. It's sort of like a country and they have their own government and they just live separately from the other colonies.

Mark: It was a group of people that lived away from the English, but they were still ruled by King James.

Ned: They pick leaders and they're smaller than a state, bigger than a city, sometimes. [Who owns the colonies?] The king of England.

Sue: It's like a city where people live and its owned by the king.

Helen: It's like a village with not a lot of people and it's not a big piece of land--it's really small--and a lot of people live in it. It's really broken down. There aren't any fancy houses or anything.

Kay: A colony is a little village that has many houses and the person who brought them there would be the king or ruler of that colony. The colony was along the Atlantic Ocean.

Question #3. (Point to eastern seaboard on map) The colonies in this part of what is now the United States were English colonies. Why did they belong to England instead of France or Spain?

Prior to the unit, eight students explained that the English were the first to explore and claim these lands. Mark did not mention this idea spontaneously but agreed when it was mentioned to him. Ned could not respond.

Tim: Because the English put flags all out from Maine to Georgia.

Mark: Well, the people that lived here were English and they came from England. [Why do you think they got to be English colonies?] French colonies were from France and the English colonies were English. [Do you think it has to do with who was there first?] Yeah.

Teri: Because the English people found them.

Sue: Maybe the English were the first to come to this place.

Helen: Because right up here is New England. So they thought, "If this is our land, why share it with Spain?" They set a flag down in the land and said "This is New England's land. I conquered New England."

Following the unit, eight students stated specifically that the colonies were English because the English were the first to explore and claim them. The other two students did not state this explicitly, but they did say that the colonies were English because they were settled by people who came from England.

Tim: Because people from England came over and planted the flag and just claimed it as theirs.

Mark: Because England claimed them first.

Brad: England discovered them.

Helen: Because King James put the flag in this land--the middle colonies--his servants came over and put the flag in the middle colonies and they called all in the north and in the south English colonies.

Kay: The colonies that settled here, they were from England.

The teacher emphasized the use of flags (sailing under flags, planting flags) as a way to provide students with a visual image of the idea that explorers sailed on behalf of particular European nations and claimed discovered lands in the names of those nations (or their monarchs). Several students remembered and used this image of planting flags in discussing European land claims.

Question #4. Native American Indians were already living here when the English came. So how could the English explorers claim the land for England?

Prior to the unit, this question produced a variety of responses, some focusing on the Europeans and some focusing on the Native Americans. Among students who focused on the Europeans, two absolved them of potential blame by suggesting that they did not know that the Native Americans were there or that

the land belonged to them, but one noted that the Europeans took the land by force and three others stated that the Europeans were greedy, arrogant, or lacking in respect for the Native Americans. Among students who focused on the Native Americans, three suggested that the Indians did not know that they had discovered land and could lay formal claim to it and three others suggested that the Indians did not realize what the Europeans were doing until it was too late for them to stop it. Sue was the only student to indicate that there was a fundamental difference between the Europeans and the Native Americans in ideas about land ownership and use. Brad's response is interesting as an extended attempt to grapple with the question by reasoning from limited prior knowledge.

Jason: They might not have seen them at first.

Tim: You gotta fight for it. They might just let them take it over because they had a more powerful army, so the Indians just moved out.

Brad: The Indians weren't exploring when they found the United States. You need kind of people there or something there to discover. So the Indians didn't really discover it. . . . I don't think the Indians marked it off. They marked it off in tribes, like the Plains Indians, South Central, Northwest, and they kind of stayed in their own groups, but they didn't say "This is my tepee, stay out of it." They kind of shared. They didn't know basically how big the United States were and when Christopher Columbus discovered the Bahamas and then came back on a second voyage, I forgot his name, he went off, and an Indian told him about the Fountain of Youth in Florida. The way it sounded to me, there basically wasn't any Indians there. You just put a flag there and it would kind of be yours as far as you could see. Spain was doing most of the exploring then and then France and England came and did some more exploring. They thought America should be Christopher Columbus's because he discovered it first, but really he discovered the Bahamas. I'm not really sure how they could just come and take the land.

Teri: Because the Native Americans didn't know that they found anything. They were just traveling, following the buffalo.

Sue: Well, some of the Native Americans didn't like it because it was no one's land. It was just there so people could walk on it. [The Indians didn't stick their flag in the ground and say "This land is ours," is that what you mean?] They did do that but the Native Americans just wanted it to be everyone's land. But the English wanted to claim it for their king or queen.

Kay: They didn't think much of the Indians. They just thought, "I found it, it's mine." Plus, the Indians probably didn't know they were there until a couple of months after they were there, or maybe a couple of years.

Rita: The Native Americans didn't know what they were doing and the English said "This is our land now, so you have to move over."

Following the unit, the students produced a similar range of responses, but now they placed more emphasis on how the Europeans took the land by force and that they were arrogant in not respecting the Native Americans. Two students now mentioned treaties, although both of them implied that the treaties were not honestly negotiated fair bargains but instead were just another part of the takeover process.

Jason: They signed a treaty. [Who?] England with the Indians. [What did the treaty say?] It said that "You are giving us this land."

Tim: They just didn't really care. The English just took it. None of them cared. [How could they just take the land?] Sometimes they'd just have treaties and if the Indians moved out, they'd give the Indians land and just leave them alone, but they just kept taking the Indians' land and the treaties didn't really mean anything.

Brad: I think they kind of moved them out. They wanted the colonies to get bigger. I think they kind of forced the Indians out.

Sue: They didn't care what the Indians said about it. They just wanted to claim land for their king.

Kay: They just put a flag on it and said it was theirs and the Indians didn't have a way of claiming it.

Rita: The English thought they were better than the Indians and the Indians didn't know how to fight with guns.

Question #5. Why do you think England started sending people over here to live in these settlements that we called colonies? Why did England want to have colonies?

Prior to the unit, three students could not respond to this question, two suggested that England wanted to relieve overcrowding or be able to accommodate

a larger population, and the other five suggested that the acquisition of additional land would enhance English power, wealth, or prestige.

> *Jason:* So they could have more land. [Why would they want more land?] Because they could be more powerful.
>
> *Mark:* Maybe so they could have more land to their name. [Why would that benefit them?] Maybe more people could move into the land.
>
> *Sue:* Because people could claim that land and they just wanted them to maybe go there and live there. [Why would they want more land?] Because I guess the more land you have, the richer you are.
>
> *Kay:* To start a new world. [Why?] They might be considered richer because they had more land.

Responses were similar following the unit. This time only one student could not respond, three spoke of relieving overcrowding or accommodating a larger population, and six spoke of enhancing power, wealth, or prestige. Both before and after the unit, some of the latter students pictured a personal rivalry between monarchs seeking to outdo one another, rather than a competition between nations for hegemony in the New World. Even among students who clearly understood that the acquisition of lands in the New World meant real increases in wealth and power (not just bragging rights among fellow monarchs), none said anything about the economic principles or processes involved (e.g., mercantilism). For example, no one described the potential of colonies as sources of raw materials or as markets for finished products.

> *Jason:* It was good to have colonies because it made them more powerful. [How did it make them more powerful?] They thought the more you had, the richer you were.
>
> *Tim:* Because it was their land. [Was it good to have that land?] Yeah, because you'd be a bigger country. They were kind of competing with each other, trying to get as much land as they can.
>
> *Mark:* King James wanted the first people that came over to get gold plus more land. [How did gold and land help the king?] It made him richer.
>
> *Ned:* So it makes their country look richer. [How?] Because it owned more land than some of the other countries.

Helen: More land for the king. He had only this little bit of land and he didn't think that was good enough for him. He wanted to have all of this land. [How did it benefit him to have all that land?] It made him more powerful because he ruled more land.

Rita: For the land. [Why?] Because it was overpopulated and whatever is on the land, the king owns.

Questions on the Early Settlements

Questions #6-9 dealt with the earliest settlements. They invited students to relate the factual information they had learned about Roanoke Island, Jamestown, and Plymouth.

Question #6. What can you tell me about these early colonies? Do you know any of their names, or who lived in them, or what went on? (If student is able to respond, probe initial response and then ask if student knows about any other colonies. Continue to exhaustion of knowledge.)

This question addressed two issues, one dealing with the names of the early colonies and another dealing with who lived in these colonies or what went on there. These two issues are designated as Questions 6a and 6b in the text below and in Table 4.

Question #6a. What were the names of the early colonies?

Prior to the unit, none of the students could name any of the colonies. Following the unit, 9 students supplied specific names and the 10th referred to the New England, middle, and southern colonies (this three-part classification had been used in teaching about the colonies during the unit). Among students who mentioned specific colonies, 8 mentioned one or more of the first three settlements (Roanoke Island, Jamestown, Plymouth) and 7 mentioned one or more names of the larger colonies that eventually became states (Virginia, Massachusetts, etc.)

Question #6b. What can you tell me about these early colonies?

Prior to the unit, the only fact about the colonies that was supplied by any of the students was Kay's statement that they were English colonies. No one even mentioned the Pilgrims or the first Thanksgiving, underscoring the fact that the students did not yet have knowledge of the term "colonies" and did not yet connect what they had learned about the first Thanksgiving with the larger story of European exploration and colonization of the New World.

Following the unit, only five students supplied information about the colonies beyond naming some of them. The information supplied by these students consisted of basic facts: There were 13 colonies; life was difficult at first in the early settlements; John Smith, John White, and William Bradford were the leaders. The students had learned much more than what they said in response to this open-ended question, however, as their postunit responses to subsequent questions indicated.

Question #7: Have you heard of Roanoke Island? (If yes: What do you know about it?)

Prior to the unit, none of the students knew anything at all about Roanoke Island. Following the unit, all 10 students knew that Roanoke Island had been the site of the "lost colony" that mysteriously disappeared, and most of them recounted details of the story at some length. Most of these students explained the gist of the story correctly, although 4 referred to the leader as John Smith (rather than John White) and one named King James (rather than Sir Walter Raleigh) as the founder. Helen, however, conflated what she had learned about Roanoke Island with what she had learned about Jamestown, mixing the elements into a single expanded story. Helen's version also has Virginia Dare as the mother of the first English baby born in the New World (rather than as the baby herself), as well as some charming inserted commentaries about life at

the time as she understood it. Helen frequently provided extended narratives that included conflations and fanciful elaborations. For additional examples and descriptions of this response style, see VanSledright and Brophy (1991; in press).

> *Tim:* King James found Roanoke Island and said that John White could be the leader and if they wanted to, they could start a colony. So they started building Roanoke Island, but they ran out of supplies. So John White and a bunch of other guys went over to England and there was a war in England and they couldn't get back for about three years. Finally they went back and nobody and nothing was there. All there was was a tree that said "Croatoan." Everybody disappeared.
>
> *Brad:* Yes, it's a lost island. They came from England and they had a fort there and they ran out of supplies. John Smith had to go back to England and get more supplies. There was a war and they said he had to stay there and help. It was three years before the war was over and when he went back, there wasn't anything left on the island. It's a mystery.
>
> *Sue:* John White took his family over there and his daughter was married, so they took her husband along and she was ready to have a baby and they ran out of supplies and he had to go back. He went to get more supplies and there was a war going on and he couldn't leave for three years. The lady's daughter was named Virginia Dare. Anyway, John White came back and no one was there and all he could find was a tree that said "Croatoan." [So what happened to Roanoke Island?] It just disappeared. The fort was ruined. Nobody knows what happened.
>
> *Helen:* King James sent three ships over and they were called the Godspeed, the Susan Constant, and the Discovery. He sent the ships from England and the captain of the ship was John Smith and these ships were really dirty. They got there and they lived really good. There were Indians. It was a good clean life. John Smith's daughter was Virginia Dare and she was pregnant at the time and the father was John White. John White went back to England and there was a war going on and at Roanoke Island the Indians started to get real mean and then John Smith went on the Indians' land and the Indians caught him and the Indian chief's daughter, Pocahontas, told her father not to do that. Back then when a daughter sticks up for another person, it means that Pocahontas owned him because she saved his life. Meanwhile, John White went to England and there was a war going on and when he came back with all the supplies and right before John White left, Virginia Dare had the baby. He went back and Roanoke Island and all the people were gone. People didn't know what happened to it. I think that something happened between the Indians and the Americans and the Indians killed them all.

The fact that all of the students remembered the gist of the Roanoke Island story underscores the power of the narrative structure for helping students remember newly learned information, especially narratives containing the kinds of romance and adventure found in the Roanoke Island story (and in the John Smith-Pocahontas story). An interesting gender difference appeared in the students' responses to this question: Although most of the students recounted the story in some detail, four of the girls but none of the boys mentioned Virginia Dare. This is another of many indications in our data that girls are more likely than boys to note and remember historical information that mentions particular females or details that have special relevance for female roles in the events under discussion.

Question #8. Have you heard about Jamestown? (If yes: What do you know about it?)

Prior to the unit, three students said that they had never heard of Jamestown and six others said that they had heard of it but could not say anything about it. Thus, the term "Jamestown" was more familiar to the students than the term "Roanoke Island" was prior to the unit, but they still could not provide substantive information about Jamestown. The exception was Rita, who provided a lengthy response reflecting stories that she had heard or read from children's literature. Her narrative is basically the story of John Smith and Pocahontas, but Rita has conflated it (or at least, the name of the Indian woman) with the story of Hiawatha.

> It's Hiawatha. Her dad was chief of the Native Americans that lived there. Then Hiawatha fell in love with this one guy. He was one of the Pilgrims. They went to Jamestown and went over and found this land. It was real nice land to live in, so they named it Jamestown and then the Indians . . . Hiawatha would go over there and spy on them, and they were trying all this stuff to grow corn and how to fish, and Hiawatha told them how to fish and stuff. Everybody in Hiawatha's village had to work and Hiawatha's dad didn't have her work. She got to play all the time and she was playing and she saw

these guys and she fell in love with this one. She told her father about it and she said if they didn't hurt them, then they'd let them stay. Then these guys found Hiawatha's village and they started taking corn away from them and nobody seen it and Hiawatha was walking over there and she seen it, but she didn't tell her father because she loved this guy. [Is this guy's name John Smith?] Yeah. Finally her father found out about it because everybody told him about it. The girls in the village seen them. So Hiawatha's father sent troops over and John Smith got captured and so during this, everybody got dressed up because Hiawatha's father was going to sacrifice him to this god.

Following the unit, nine of the students (all but Kay, who reported that she was home with chicken pox when the class was learning about Jamestown) supplied at least two facts about Jamestown. Six mentioned that it was named after King James, three mentioned that John Smith was the leader or that the colony was helped by Pocahontas, and two mentioned that Jamestown was the first colony to survive or that it was governed by the House of Burgesses. All nine of these students also provided one or more unique items of information (such as that the colony was surrounded by a stockade, that many people died during the first year, that the colony suffered because men were concentrating on finding gold rather than on doing needed work, that the colony later became Virginia, or that the people grew tobacco). Rita once again concentrated on the John Smith-Pocahontas story. This time she named Pocahontas correctly, but she referred to John Smith as John White.

Jason: They named it after King James. [What happened there?] They made a fort. People kept on coming.

Mark: The main reason they went there was to find gold but they didn't find it and nobody was helping build up the colony because they wanted to find gold. A lot of them knew they wouldn't find it and John Smith made up a rule that said if you didn't work, you didn't get to eat or have any shelter. Jamestown was the first surviving colony. [Anything else you can think of?] Pocahontas was one of their friends. She was an Indian girl.

Brad: It was named after King James and there was a Fort James. It was a town that was ruled by the House of Burgess and it later became Virginia.

Sue: John Smith was the leader of that town. It was named after the king and they had a fort named after King James. The only friend they had there was Pocahontas and some other Indians. John Smith got captured and he was going to get killed, but Pocahontas saved him and brought corn and food to them when they needed it.

Rita: Pocahontas helped them to survive. Pocahontas was an Indian princess and there was Powhatan and he wanted to kill John White and Pocahontas saved him twice.

Question #9. Have you heard about Plymouth Rock or Plymouth Plantation? (If yes: What do you know about it?)

This question overlaps somewhat with Question #11. Question #11 focused on why the Pilgrims decided to leave England and come to America, but for students who had not already discussed the Pilgrims in answering Question #9, it began by asking what the students knew about the Pilgrims. Thus, for some students, Question #11 was actually two questions that we have designated as Questions 11a (What do you know about the Pilgrims?) and Question 11b (Why did the Pilgrims decide to leave England and come to America?). To simplify data presentation and analysis, we have included students' responses to Question 11a with their responses to Question #9.

In contrast to their preunit ignorance of Roanoke Island and Jamestown, all of the students had heard of Plymouth Rock (but not Plymouth Plantation) and nine of them could supply information about it. Seven stated that Plymouth Rock was where the Pilgrims landed. In addition or instead, two said that it was in Massachusetts and one said that the first Thanksgiving was held there. At this point, Brad thought that Christopher Columbus was the leader of the Pilgrims and Kay thought that the Pilgrims did not merely land at Plymouth Rock but literally sailed their boat into it and had to stop there because the boat was damaged. Several other students said that the Pilgrims landed "on" (rather than "at") Plymouth Rock, suggesting that they too might have had some misconception about the nature of this landing.

Jason: It's where the Pilgrims landed.

Mark: The Pilgrims landed on Plymouth Rock.

Brad: Christopher Columbus landed on Plymouth Rock. [What else do you know about Plymouth Rock?] It's where Indians and Pilgrims held the first Thanksgiving.

Ned: Pilgrims stepped on Plymouth Rock to get on this land.

Teri: The Pilgrims landed on it.

Kay: I think the Pilgrims first came and hit that rock and that made the boat stop. They got off onto the United States.

Following the unit, Brad still identified Christopher Columbus as the leader of the Pilgrims and Kay still thought that the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock because they slammed into it. Nevertheless, both of these students (and the other eight as well) supplied various facts about the Plymouth colony. The emphasis in these postunit responses was on the colony rather than the rock, although no one used the name Plymouth Plantation.

Eight students said that the colony was founded by the Pilgrims, and six of these added that they had come for religious freedom or to found their own church. Three mentioned that William Bradford was the leader of the colony and three mentioned that the group had originally been heading toward Jamestown but ended up in Plymouth because their ship had been blown off course. Two mentioned the Mayflower Compact and two others mentioned that the colony was located in Massachusetts. Facts mentioned by individual students were that the first Thanksgiving was held in Plymouth, that it was a very small colony, that Sarah Morton lived in it, that most of the time the colonists got along with the Indians, and that they were helped by Squanto.

Jason: The Pilgrims came. They made friends with the Indians and they had the first Thanksgiving.

Tim: William Bradford and a bunch of guys went over. William Bradford was the leader and they were Pilgrims. They wanted their own church so they came over from England and started to build a

colony in America. . . . Plymouth Rock was one of the first colonies. It was small.

Brad: It was kind of a little town. Christopher Columbus's ship got blown off course and they had something you had to sign that would prove that you would do your share of work and wouldn't be lazy. The Mayflower Compact. If you didn't sign it, you had to go back. It was a punishment if you didn't sign it.

Teri: I think it's another colony and all I know about it is there was a girl named Sarah Morton in it. She was a little girl and she couldn't talk to her parents unless they spoke to her. She had to wear a lot of clothes and she had to do a lot of chores.

Sue: The Pilgrims came over and William Bradford made them sign the Mayflower Compact. They had to sign it or be shipped back to England. It said they had to work and stuff. It was like a promise. [Do you know why the Pilgrims came to the colony?] They were really going to Jamestown but the wind took them to Plymouth.

Helen: The Pilgrims sailed there. [Why did they come to the New World?] Religious rights. [What was life like in Plymouth?] It was good except for the Indians. [They had fights with the Indians?] No, most of the time they got along.

Kay: The Pilgrims sailed across the sea and came ashore and hit this one big rock and they named the colony Plymouth. They were going to find new land for religious freedom.

Rita: The Pilgrims went to Massachusetts. It's rough and cold in the winter and the Indians taught them how to plant corn. Squanto helped them. [Who were the Pilgrims?] They came from England and they came because they didn't want to follow the king's rules because he told them what church to go to. The Pilgrims thought that wasn't fair so they went to the new land.

Questions About the People and Life in the Colonies

Questions 10-12 asked about the people who came to live in the colonies and about how colonial life compared to life back in England.

Question #10. Do you know anything about groups of people who decided to leave England and come to live in the New World? (If student names a group, probe this initial response and then ask about other groups.)

Both Question #1 and Question #10 asked about the backgrounds and motives of Europeans who came to settle in the New World. Question #1 focused on Europeans in general, whereas Question #10 focused specifically on the English.

Prior to the unit, only two students were able to respond to this question. Teri characterized the English emigrants generically as "people who wanted to live somewhere else," and Jason described the Pilgrims as seeking to escape the mean king of England.

Following the unit, all 10 students were able to identify at least one reason why certain people left England for America. Seven mentioned a desire to search for gold or riches and seven mentioned a desire for religious freedom. In addition or instead, four mentioned that the emigrants desired land, one mentioned that they desired to build a better life, and one mentioned that they desired to escape overcrowding in England. Even in these postunit responses, there were indications that most students did not realize that most people of the times w ed on farms and that most of the emigrants came here to farm. Only four students mentioned people coming here for land, and of these, Tim seemed to think that most emigrants came for reasons other than farming and Helen thought that people became farmers only because they could not get better jobs.

> *Tim:* A lot of them were people who wanted to find gold. They came over here for the gold. [Were there some farmers?] I'm sure there were some, but not a lot. [Any other kinds of people?] Just people that wanted more land. They came here because there was a lot of land.
>
> *Sue:* They wanted religious freedom. The king made them go to his church and they didn't want to do that so they came over for religious freedom. [Why did other people come to the colonies?] To build a better life and to discover gold and stuff.
>
> *Helen:* They came for religious freedom and to get away from people. [What kind of people were they?] Back then, there weren't a lot of jobs. You couldn't expect to be a truck driver. It was hard to get a job and they didn't have jobs, so they planted corn, so I guess you can call them farmers. They just grew crops and other stuff.
>
> *Question #11. (If first half was already answered, go to second half). Have you heard of the Pilgrims? What do you know about them? . . . Why did the Pilgrims decide to leave England and come to America?*

Responses to the first half of this question were included in the data presentation and discussion for Question #9. Here we address Question #11b on the Pilgrim's reasons for leaving England.

Prior to the unit, five students could not respond to the question and one guessed that the Pilgrims were searching for gold or riches. The other four indicated that the Pilgrims wanted to escape the king of England. However, among these students only Rita understood that the problem focused on religious freedom. Jason, Mark, and Ned knew that the king was pressuring or mistreating the Pilgrims, but could not say why.

> *Jason:* Because the king was being mean to them.
>
> *Mark:* They wanted to be free of the king. [Why?] Because they didn't really like what he wanted them to do. [What did he want them to do?] I don't know.
>
> *Ned:* For freedom from their king. [What was happening?] They weren't free to do what they wanted. [Was that something in particular or a lot of different things?] A lot of different things.
>
> *Rita:* The king was forcing them. They had to believe a certain way and they said "I don't want to believe this way." So they tried to pack up their stuff but they could only take one cat and one dog. So they got on these ships and went to Plymouth Rock. They wanted to believe how they wanted to believe. [Are you talking about believing in God?] Yes. The king told them they had to go to a certain church and they had to do this and that. If they didn't, they'd get killed.

Following the unit, eight students stated clearly that the Pilgrims came for religious freedom. Brad initially forgot but remembered the story about the king when the interviewer mentioned the term "religious freedom." Teri simply did not know why the Pilgrims came to America.

> *Jason:* They wanted their own church. . . . The king said that they had to go to a certain church.
>
> *Tim:* The Pilgrims wanted their own church. They were religious people and they were sort of different from the rest of the people, so they came over here because there was a lot of land and they

wanted to build a church. [How come they couldn't have a church of their own in England?] Because they were different from everybody else. The king said that they couldn't build it there.

Brad: To discover new land, I think. [They came for religious freedom. Why?] I forgot who it was, but he wanted people to come to his church and if they didn't, they couldn't go to church. So they came over here for religious freedom.

Helen: This man built a church and said if you live in England, you go to my church and the people didn't think that was fair. They wanted to believe in God but not the way that he did.

Rita: They came from England because they didn't want to follow the king's rules. He told them what church to go to. The Pilgrims thought that wasn't fair, so they went to the new land. Then they could worship the way they wanted.

Question #12. How do you think life in the colonies compared with life back home in England? What were some similarities and differences?

Nine of the students (all but Helen) responded to this question, generating a total of 15 comparisons. Given that the students knew very little about either England or the colonies at the time, these were inferences from a very limited knowledge base. Four students suggested that the colonies were mostly wilderness whereas England had developed houses and roads. Three indicated that the colonies had few people living in isolation from one another but England had a dense population. Two noted that the colonists enjoyed freedom but the English had to submit to the king, and two others suggested that the colonists had to adjust to unfamiliar geography and life conditions whereas the English enjoyed familiar settings and routines. Individual students indicated that the English could buy what they needed at stores but the colonists could not, that there were more animals in the colonies, that there were wars in the colonies, and that there were dark-skinned people in the colonies.

Tim: It was sort of different because there were a lot of trees and England was just a bunch of buildings--not a bunch but some. [How else was it different?] Here you'd have to sleep in tents and there you'd have a little house.

Brad: In the colonies, you were just learning things and they had a few wars and they were just getting settled. But back home they knew where everything was and they had friends. You know where you're at.

Ned: It was probably harder in the colonies, because in England you could find stuff better and maybe a little bit of stores. [Any other ways it would be different?] Got to hunt for your food in the colonies. [How would they get their food in England?] They'd probably buy it.

Sue: When they went to the New World, there were no houses or big buildings. It was just land and forest. And maybe England was different. They maybe had buildings and houses and stuff. The colonies didn't. And maybe there were roads in England.

Kay: It was different because there was more trees and wild life here. In England it was more developed and had more houses and villages and cities and stuff.

Rita: It was harder in the colonies because they had to get used to the land and stuff. In the new land it was harder because you had to go like 10 miles to get to the next neighbor's house.

Following the unit, all 10 students were able to respond to the question, and they generated a total of 22 comparisons. Most of these were the same ones that had been noted prior to the unit, but with considerable difference in emphasis. Following the unit, 7 students noted that the English could purchase food and supplies in stores but the colonists could not, and 5 noted that the colonists were not under tight control by the English king. Three students now mentioned that the colonies were a wilderness but England was more developed, and individual students mentioned that the colonists had to cope with the unfamiliar rather than rely on familiar routines, that the New World had a small and isolated population rather than a dense population, that the colonists did not have medicine, that the colonies did not have the right materials to allow them to make the supplies that were manufactured in England, that there were jobs in England that did not exist in the colonies, that there were Native Americans in the colonies, and that the colonists had to fight or learn to get along with the Native Americans. The two most popular postunit responses

reflected themes emphasized during the unit. In teaching about the early colonies, the teacher emphasized the "establishing and sustaining life in the wilderness" aspects through dramatic storytelling, and her coverage of the Pilgrims emphasized their desire for religious freedom as the motive for their coming to America.

> *Tim:* Here there wasn't a lot of people or houses yet and over there, they were all settled and they were ruled by kings and queens. They just had leaders of different groups of people like the Pilgrims.
>
> *Mark:* In England they had more supplies and they had to do what King James said. In the colonies they didn't have to do exactly what he said because he wasn't really there to tell them what to do. [Why would they have more supplies in England?] Because that's where they were originally grown or made and they didn't have to be shipped over. [Why didn't they make the supplies in the colonies?] Because they didn't have the right materials.
>
> *Ned:* It was easier in the colonies because they weren't being bossed around. It was harder because the colonists had to find their own food. They didn't have stores where you can buy stuff.
>
> *Teri:* They had Native Americans in the colonies. It was easier in the colonies because they didn't have a king ordering them around all the time. They had more freedom.
>
> *Kay:* In the colonies you had to do everything on your own but in England the king would tell you to do things, but everything was already made and you could just buy it.
>
> *Rita:* Life was different. It was harder because you had to fight for your food because of the animals. You couldn't go to the 7-11 or other stores. They had stores in England.

Questions About Colonies' Locations and their Implications

Questions 13-15 asked about the reasons why colonies were located where they were or about the effects of geographical location on colonial life. These questions invited students to bring to bear what they had learned about human-environment interactions in geography classes to their thinking about the colonies.

Question #13. (Refer to map) Most of the early colonies were located near water--either right on the seacoast or on rivers. Why was that?

We expected that students would emphasize the need for fresh drinking water and the importance of boat travel at the time in responding to this question. As it happened, these were the two most common themes in the students' responses, both before and after the unit. However, few of these responses communicated clear understanding that water is vital to life or that water transportation was crucial to the colonists. Instead, most of the responses depicted the colonists' behavior as a matter of convenience rather than necessity.

Prior to the unit, seven students provided substantive responses to the question, generating a total of nine reasons for location of colonies on the seacoast or on rivers. Four students emphasized that people traveled by boat then, three noted that they needed water to drink, and two suggested that these locations made for convenient fishing or swimming.

Jason: So they could get around in boats.

Tim: Because that's pretty much the only way you can get water. If you lived out in the middle of nowhere, you couldn't get water.

Mark: So they would have more to drink.

Brad: They settled here because they kind of noticed the land right here. They might have eventually traveled a little bit into the United States.

Ned: So they can fish. [Any other reasons?] Get around in boats.

Sue: Maybe they liked the water. [Why?] On a hot day, they could go swimming or something. [Any other ways it might have been good for them to be by the water?] To drink the water . . . fish.

Rita: Because they wouldn't have to walk a mile to get to the water. [Why would they want to be by the water?] For enemies, I guess. Or like if anything happens, they can go right out. They don't want to walk. They didn't have any cars.

Following the unit, all 10 students provided at least one substantive response to the question. Five mentioned that people traveled by boat in those days, and four mentioned the need for drinking water. Ideas mentioned by individual students included the notion that location on the seacoast made it possible to see resupply ships coming from Europe and the notions that location on rivers would make it easier to fish, to hunt animals who came to drink there, or to find your way back home (i.e., when venturing out into the wilderness, you could stay close to the river and thus avoid getting lost in the forest). These postunit responses showed somewhat more creative thinking than the preunit responses did, but they still indicated only limited understanding of the necessity for fresh drinking water and for travel by boat. This was true even though the teaching about the Jamestown colony had emphasized that lack of a reliable source for fresh drinking water was a major problem with the colony's original location.

Jason: They wanted to be close to the water so if they wanted to go back, they wouldn't have to walk through a lot of woods and stuff. They didn't want to get lost.

Tim: I'm not sure. Probably so they could go back and forth to the big ships.

Mark: So they'd have more water to drink, but they stopped drinking it because the salt water was dehydrating their bodies [This refers to what he had learned about Jamestown.]

Brad: When they came over, that's where they ended up. When they got off, they just settled right along the ocean coast and later on they spread out a little bit more. They wanted to be near their boats to go back and get more supplies. It was convenient.

Ned: So they can fish and get around places so they didn't have to walk all over.

Teri: They lived near the water because if there was a ship coming, they would know about it. [Why would they want to see a ship?] Because maybe more people would be coming or more supplies. [This reflects an incident in the Sarah Morton story.]

Sue: They didn't have enough water, so they lived on the shore. [They depended on that water for drinking?] Well, for cleaning and for washing clothes and cooking.

Helen: I don't know--no faucets. Deer and buffalo and stuff went to the river to drink and the colonists could catch them by the water for lunch or breakfast.

Kay: They didn't know there was other land. [But they still wanted to build their colonies close to the water. Why?] So they could have water to drink and to go other places traveling on their boats.

Rita: Because if the Indians chased them off their land, they could just take off on their boat. [Any other reasons?] They could ship tea to them.

Question #14. (Refer to map) As towns and even cities started to build up along the seacoast, some people started to move inland and lived on what was called the frontier. How was life on the frontier different from life on the coast?

This question was included because, in previous years, the teacher had dramatically emphasized the contrasts between life in well-established communities near the coast (towns in the north, plantations in the south) and life on the frontier where individual families worked on their own to clear land and establish homesteads. She did not provide as much emphasis on this contrast this year, devoting the time instead to increased coverage of slavery (see discussion of Question #16). Consequently, there was no dramatic change in the students' response from before to after the unit.

Prior to the unit, six students were able to respond to the question, suggesting a total of eight comparisons between frontier and coastal life. Four of the students noted that on the frontier, people lived in isolation from one another rather than close together in communities. However, two of these presented this as a positive feature, noting that the frontier offered a chance to escape the overcrowding in the east. In contrast, the other two presented it as a negative feature, suggesting that life on the frontier was isolated and lonely. Two students noted that life on the frontier was necessarily simple

(like camping in the wilderness), one noted that there were more animals on the frontier, and one noted the problem of conflict with Indians on the frontier.

Jason: Probably lonely. [What else?] Wild animals.

Tim: Indians. They just kept on moving the Indians back.

Brad: It was kind of like camping out. You have what you need and that's it.

Teri: Probably peaceful and quiet . . . I don't know.

Helen: I think it was fairly good. It was a big area and not a lot of people went over there because not a lot of people knew about it. They thought this was all the land. But really, there's all this. So people came over here and they weren't crowded anymore.

Kay: I think it would be a lot different because not too many people were there. There wasn't anything on the frontier except trees and stuff.

Following the unit, six students provided substantive responses to the question and generated 13 comparisons. Four mentioned conflict with Indians on the frontier, three noted that you had to build your home from scratch there, three noted that there were no stores to purchase supplies there, two indicated that there was less water there (these responses were probably cued by Question #13), and one noted that there were more animals there. The six students who responded to the question following the unit gave more sophisticated and detailed answers than they had prior to the unit, but four students could not respond at all.

Jason: They didn't have the groceries.

Tim: There were more Indians in the frontier, and they ran into problems with Indians and wars. Here along the coast, they didn't have as much problem with Indians. . . . There wasn't that much water on the frontier. [Did that make it harder to get around?] Yeah. [How did they get around?] We didn't study that.

Brad: You still had to build and they had a problem with the Indians.

Ned: They didn't have as much water to catch fish, but there might be a little more animals to catch. . . . They didn't have anywhere

to live and they had to build it all. [Was it more dangerous?] Yeah, they didn't know what was out there and there was the Indians.

Kay: It seems like it would be brand new again, like they just settled. I know it was hard because they had to make things themselves and couldn't just go to the store and buy things.

Rita: They pushed the Indians and French back. They probably killed the Indians and the French probably went back to their home land and so did the Spanish. [What was life like on the frontier?] It was harder because it would take longer because they didn't have cars, so they'd have to walk a long way. They had to hunt and fish for their food.

Question #15. (Refer to map) We sometimes speak of three groups of colonies--the northern colonies, the middle colonies, and the southern colonies. Do you know anything about the differences between these three groups of colonies?

This was another lesson that the teacher had developed in the past, indicating that as the economies of the colonies developed, the New England colonies emphasized fishing and related ocean activities, the middle colonies emphasized farming of food crops, and the southern colonies emphasized the growing of cotton and tobacco, frequently on large plantations. This year, however, the teacher skimmed over this material more lightly. Consequently, both before and after the unit, the students' responses were limited to educated guesses based on their knowledge that the climate was warmer in the southern colonies. Prior to the unit, only four students could offer substantive responses to the question. Tim and Mark noted differences in climate. Jason and Kay guessed about other differences that might have existed between these groups of colonies.

Jason: They were in different parts of the United States. [What else?] They did different things (could not elaborate).

Tim: Probably a little hotter down here.

Mark: In the southern colonies, it was probably a lot warmer than in New England. [Did that make life different for those people?] For the New England colonies, they would have to dress warmer and the southern colonies wouldn't have to dress as warm.

Kay: They might have talked a different language. Maybe down here there was more Indians and up here there was barely none.

Following the unit, five students noted the climate difference and drew inferences about its implications for life conditions. Some of these students mentioned differences in length of growing season or other aspects of crop production, as did Ned and Helen (who based their thinking on factors other than climate). However, much of what the students inferred or suggested was vague or inaccurate. No one mentioned ocean fishing in New England, plantations in the south, or other specific economic differences.

Tim: It was cold up here and a lot of people couldn't make it through the cold weather, and down here, a lot of people could. [Did that affect the kinds of crops they grew and the food they had?] Yeah. It was hot there and they could grow a lot of stuff, and in Massachusetts it was a shorter growing season.

Mark: The southern colonies were warmer than New England. In New England they had to have warmer clothes and they didn't in the southern colonies.

Brad: In the southern it would be a little warmer and in the north a little bit colder. In the New England colonies, you'd have to have tighter-built shelters and heavier clothing, where down south you could have shacks for houses but sometimes it can get real cold. [How did it affect their crops?] For farming, in the New England colonies they had a shorter growing season and in the south a longer growing season.

Ned: It was drier in the southern colonies and wetter and swampier in the New England colonies. [How did that affect things?] It was better to grow things in the southern colonies because the plants wouldn't get overwatered and die.

Sue: Maybe weather is the only difference, but I don't know.

Helen: One grew crops and the other didn't. They cooked over fires. They caught an animal and roasted it over a fire.

Kay: I think this one was a little cooler because it was further north and this would be a little warmer. They had to wear about eight layers of clothes and they probably only had to wear three or four. [What effect do you think it had on planting crops and growing food?] I don't think there was really an effect.

Rita: I think life in the southern colonies was easier but I don't know why.

Questions About the Slaves and Slavery

Question #16. Some of the people in the colonies were slaves. What does that mean? What is a slave? . . . Where were they from originally, and how did they get to America?

The previous year, in the process of talking about plantations in the southern colonies, the teacher had talked about the difficult lives lived by slaves. However, she had not said much about who the slaves were, where they had come from, or how they had come to be slaves and be brought to America. Consequently, many of the students emerged from the colonies unit believing that the slaves were merely a subset of the people who had come from England. Often they thought of slaves as indentured servants who would be freed from their condition of servitude after a number of years or else as people who agreed to take on low-paying and unpleasant jobs because they lacked better alternatives. In teaching the unit this year, the teacher determined to address these misconceptions more directly by making it clear that the slaves were black people from Africa who had been forcibly kidnapped and sold into slavery, transported to America under barbaric conditions in crowded slave ships, and then forced to do whatever work their owners wanted them to do.

To facilitate data presentation and analysis, the three issues addressed in Question #16 will be treated as Question #16a, dealing with the definition of slavery; Question #16b, dealing with the origins of slaves; and Question #16c, dealing with their transportation to America.

Question #16a. What is a slave?

Prior to the unit, all 10 students offered substantive responses to this question. Nine of them explained in one way or another that slaves were people forced to work for others against their wills, and 2 of these added that slaves were owned and sold as property. The 10th student (Mark) had the same general idea but never stated unambiguously either that the slaves were forced to work

(under threat of severe punishment) or that they were owned and sold as property. Thus, even prior to the unit, the students' knowledge of slavery was much greater than was the knowledge of the previous year's fifth graders.

> *Jason:* People that were made to do other things . . . they do things they might not like to do. [Are they paid?] No. They were forced to do things.
>
> *Mark:* A slave is really just someone who is bossed around by somebody else and not treated very good sometimes. [Who bossed the slaves around?] Different people who didn't want to do what they were supposed to do. They wanted somebody else to do their work for them. [Did they pay the slaves?] No.
>
> *Brad:* You wouldn't have the freedom to go and play Nintendo or baseball outside or riding your bike up and down the street. You had to do jobs and raise money. [Who would you do jobs for?] They kind of would sell out slaves. [Who would do this? Who would have slaves?] White men or kings and queens. [I do jobs for the university. Am I a slave?] No. You get paid for it. They wouldn't get paid for it.
>
> *Sue:* To work for someone and do things that if they didn't have slaves, they would do, like chores. [I work for the university and I do chores. Am I a slave?] No, they don't own you. They buy slaves and stuff.
>
> *Kay:* It's like the people who were really rich and popular, they boss people around to do things for them so they can sit on their butts and be lazy. [Did the rich people pay the slaves to do these things?] No. Slaves have to do it. They don't get anything back in return. [Why do they have to do it?] Some maybe were threatened--if they didn't, they'd die.
>
> *Rita:* It's a black person who has to work for someone else and do whatever they say or they'll get whipped or something. [Do they get paid?] No, they don't. They might get a treat, like molasses.

Following the unit, nine students (all but Teri, who was often reluctant to respond to interview questions unless she was very sure of what she had to say) responded to the question. All nine of these again described slaves as people forced to work for others against their wills, and seven of them now added that slaves were owned and sold as property.

Jason: They had to do things you don't want to do. [What did they have to do?] Wash houses and pick cotton. . . . They captured the slaves. They'd take them to the colonies and sell them.

Tim: They were sold to people in the English colonies. They had to work for them all day and all they would get was a place to sleep. They'd have to work for no pay. [What kind of work did they do?] They worked in the fields and just housework for some of the women.

Mark: It means that somebody would hold a person against their will and make them do stuff they don't want to do. They had to do everything for the people that bought them. They had to grow fields, tobacco and cotton and different things.

Ned: They were ordered and had to do what they were told to do, or else they'd be punished. [What kinds of things did the slaves do?] Go hunting and work in the fields and clean and cook.

Sue: A slave had a hard life because they had to do everything, but they didn't get paid. They'd only get clothes they needed and a little tiny room. If they talked back, they'd get a warning or get a lashing.

Helen: It wasn't really fun. If you did something bad, you'd get a whipping. They had to cook, clean, tend the fire, get the people ready for daily jobs, and they didn't have dusting spray. They'd use an old clothes rag and wipe it off. They'd dust, clean, cook, and while the Americans were eating, they couldn't eat--they couldn't even talk.

Kay: A slave is somebody who has a master who buys them and they have to do all the housework and they could only get five hours of sleep. [What kind of pay did they get for their work?] They didn't. They got hand-down clothes and a little bread, unless the master had a guest over [the guest] might have paid them like a dollar.

Question #16b. Where were the slaves from originally?

Prior to the unit, only Brad mentioned Africa in response to this question, and even he was not sure that all slaves came from Africa. Four students said that they did not know, and the other five suggested that the slaves were from Europe, from South America, or from the colonies themselves. Two of these, along with Brad, described slaves as black people.

Jason: The colonies.

Tim: The way I know it is they were black people. They didn't think they should live there, so they turned them into slaves.

[Where did these black people come from?] Maybe Indians. [What about black people?] They might have come from South America.

Brad: Back then a lot of slaves would be dark-skinned people. [Where were they from?] Africa.

Ned: England.

Teri: England. [Other places?] Spain. [Why did it happen to some people and not others?] I don't know.

Helen: Europe.

Following the unit, eight of the nine students who responded to the question stated that the slaves were originally from Africa. The exception was Helen, who although she described the slaves as black people who were brought to America on crowded ships, still thought that they were brought from Europe.

Brad's postunit response is worth quoting in detail because it indicates continued uncertainty about whether all of the slaves were black people originally from Africa, as well as some continued difficulty in distinguishing slaves from paid servants. He also brings the Sarah Morton story into his response, thinking that she might have been a slave because she had to work all day long.

Brad: A slave is the property of someone. People from the colonies and England would go to Africa and kidnap them and bring them over on ships and sell them to people who wanted to buy them. You could do whatever you wanted with them. They used them for farm work and housecleaning work and cooking their food and serving it. Sarah Morton tended the fireplace and polished the copper. I'm not sure if she was a slave or not. I think she was. I think she lived in Plymouth. [Did you know most of the slaves were in the southern colonies?] No, but it makes sense, because it's closer to Africa. They'd use slaves for pulling the plows or planting. Some people would have their own groceries, so the slaves would do other things. [How much did they pay the slaves?] The slaves didn't get paid, but they could earn money by going to someone else and doing extra jobs for them. [What's the difference between a slave and a servant?] A servant would just do your dishes and I think they could get paid and they'd serve you. Kind of like a maid or a butler. A slave would do the really hard work. Mostly slaves just do what they're told or they'd get whipped by a whip.

Question #16c. How did the slaves get to America?

Prior to the unit, none of the students mentioned or described slave ships, although Ned inferred that the slaves must have gotten here by boat, like everyone else. Following the unit, all nine of the students who responded to the question indicated that the slaves had come by ship. In addition, the following three students said something specific about the conditions on slave ships.

Jason: Slave ships. There wasn't any room in them.

Sue: The people just chained them and put them in the boat. They were crowded in real close together.

Helen: Ships brought them over and all these black people were crowded on ships.

Taken together, the pre- and postunit responses to Question #16 indicate that most students began the unit already possessing an accurate basic idea of the nature of slavery, although they were vague about the origins and identities of the people who became slaves in the English colonies and about how these people had come to be in America. Following the unit, the students showed good understanding of the facts that the slaves were black people captured in Africa, transported to America on slave ships, and sold into slavery. Except for Brad, the students thought slaves were unpaid forced laborers, not merely servants or low-paid workers stuck in bad jobs.

Questions About Colonial Governance and the Revolution

Question #17. England owned the colonies, but the people who lived in the colonies still had to run their everyday lives. How did that work? Did they have leaders, or rules, or laws, or what?

To facilitate presentation and analysis of data, the two colonial government issues addressed in Question #17 will be treated as Question #17a,

asking whether or not the colonies had laws or governments, and Question #17b, asking about the nature of these laws or governments.

Question #17a. Did the colonies have leaders, rules, or laws?

Prior to the unit, students' answers to this question were uncertain and vague. Three could not respond, five said that the colonies did or probably did have leaders or laws, and two (Tim and Helen) said that they did not. All of these responses reflect reasoning from a limited knowledge base.

> *Jason:* They did have leaders . . . they elected them. [Did they have laws and rules and things?] Yes, to protect them against injuries and Indians.
>
> *Tim:* Not really. They were just starting to build colonies. They weren't worried about that yet.
>
> *Brad:* They had kings and queens. [Did English colonies have kings and queens?] I don't think so. I'm not sure. They would be ruled by a president or mayor or governor. I don't know.
>
> *Sue:* They probably did. (could not elaborate)
>
> *Helen:* I'm sort of guessing. There were no rules. There were no parents that could tell you "Do this" or "Don't do this." So they said "Come over here and you'll be free." But really what they did was, they made slaves out of the people that came just to be free. So then these people were slaves over here. [Who made slaves out of them?] The people that discovered the new land.
>
> *Kay:* I think they would, because some people had to obey the rules. Like no cutting down trees or something. That would be like a law to us. [Did they have leaders?] Maybe the one who discovered the land was one of the leaders.
>
> *Rita:* I'm pretty positive they would have a leader because it would sort of like get out of hand. [How did they get leaders?] They probably had a challenge or a vote like we do now.

Following the unit, all 10 of the students confidently stated that the colonies had leaders, laws, or government. The specifics of their responses are presented and discussed as they relate to Question #17b.

Question #17b. How were the colonies governed?

Prior to the unit, only three students addressed this issue. Kay suggested that the people who discovered the land exercised authority over the colonies. Jason and Rita suggested that the colonists elected their leaders.

Following the unit, all 10 students addressed this issue. Seven suggested that leaders were elected and/or laws were adopted through town meetings or other democratic voting procedures. In addition or instead, six suggested that monarchs or appointed leaders exercised authoritarian control of the colonies. Three of these indicated that the situation was different in different colonies.

Five students mentioned the House of Burgesses at Jamestown and three mentioned the Mayflower Compact at Plymouth. Most of them described these governmental structures as mechanisms for exercising authority over the people. This is typical of children, who tend to describe governments and laws as coercive, serving to keep people from behaving badly and thus preventing chaos (Sinatra, Beck, & McKeown, 1992; Torney, 1977). However, at least one student viewed the House of Burgesses more as a mechanism for democratic self-government.

> *Jason:* A bunch of people got together and made the laws. They had to call a meeting.
>
> *Tim:* They usually didn't have one person rule everything like they did back in England. They'd work out a government and vote on everything.
>
> *Mark:* Jamestown had the House of Burgesses and they made up the rules. Plymouth had the Mayflower Compact that said they'd work together. [What does it mean, the House of Burgesses?] It was just people that met to make the rules . . . people from around the colony that people voted on.
>
> *Brad:* They were owned by King James and they had laws like the House of Burgesses and the Mayflower Compact, but I'm not too sure about having a separate leader over there. [Did they have their own leaders?] I think so, but I'm not positive. [What was the House of

Burgesses?] It was seven people who belonged to it. It was a law to make sure everybody was doing their thing. [How did you become a member of the House of Burgesses?] An election of who would be the best people.

Ned: They had rules that if you don't help hunt, you won't eat and you won't have a place to sleep. [How did they get their rules and laws?] They would sign a piece of paper and they would have major rules and everyone would sign or they'd be shipped back. [Do you know anything about the House of Burgesses?] They made rules and they picked leaders there. They voted.

Teri: I think they made their own laws.

Sue: Jamestown had the House of Burgesses and they made up the rules and before they had that, John Smith made up a rule that if you don't work, you don't eat. The other rule from Plymouth was the Mayflower Compact.

Helen: They had leaders, kings, queens. [How did they get laws?] House of Burgesses, Continental Congress. [What was the House of Burgesses?] It was this place and they made the laws there and it was like the government and you couldn't disagree with them.

Kay: They had leaders. They were the ones who brought the people and started the colonies. [Did they have rules or laws?] I think so, but I'm not sure what they are. [Do you know anything about the Mayflower Compact?] It's a contract that before you step on the land, you have to sign it.

Rita: They had to go by the king's rules but they could have . . . no they couldn't. They couldn't have any until the Revolutionary War. But they had to have the same things as the king, but they had to have one ruler that would make sure they did what they were supposed to.

Question #18. England owned the colonies for almost 200 years, but then they became the United States. Do you know anything about how that happened?

Prior to the unit, six students could not respond to the question or made responses that did not address the question directly. Jason and Sue supplied limited but correct information. Tim and Brad supplied information about the French and Indian War that they had learned in their fourth-grade Michigan history unit.

Jason: The Revolutionary War.

Tim: The English fought off everybody. That's why we speak English. The English won the United States and Spain won Mexico and France won Canada. So it was there, so they just made the Constitution. [Who's they?] The English had a president and they made the Constitution of the United States.

Brad: Wars. The most western half and the center of the United States and this was mainly all colonies and belonged to England. They fought. [Who was fighting?] America and I think the Dutch and England and France. [How did it become the United States out of all that fighting?] You win a little by little land and eventually these other countries would own just a little bit of the bottom of Michigan and a lot of the Upper Peninsula, and pretty soon they owned the entire United States.

Sue: Maybe the people started getting tired of people owning them and they wanted to be free, so they just changed it into the United States.

Responses were not much better following the unit, because the teacher had not yet begun to cover the events that led up to the American Revolution. Jason repeated what he had said prior to the unit, but Sue switched to statements about the French and Indian War. Tim mentioned the *Declaration of Independence* and the *Constitution*, but nothing about a revolutionary war. Ned and Rita now did mention the Revolutionary War, and Rita elaborated with a mixture of facts and conflations. The remaining students either could not respond to the question or supplied incorrect or irrelevant information.

Jason: The Revolutionary War.

Tim: They all joined together and had the *Constitution* or the *Declaration of Independence*. They elected a president and became one big country. [How did they break away from England?] They just decided they didn't want the English laws. They just said, "We're here, so let's just make our own country."

Ned: Revolutionary War.

Teri: I don't know exactly. More people kept coming and it got too crowded in the colonies so they decided to move out further.

Sue: They had a war. [Who?] France and the Indians and England. [What happened?] England won. The reason they had the war was they kept moving out here and the Indians and the French got mad and they

teamed up together and started fighting England. [Have you ever heard of the Revolutionary War?] That's what I was talking about.

Kay: More people came and they got crowded. [Do you know anything about the Revolutionary War?] It's the English against the French and Indians, I think.

Rita: The Revolutionary War. [What was that about?] They didn't want to mess with the king. They didn't want any relations with the king because the king sent soldiers over here to kick the people off the United States, so he was in debt and he had the Pilgrims pay taxes. The Pilgrims didn't want to pay taxes, so some of the colonists dumped the tea into the river.

Several responses to Question #18 conflated elements of the Revolutionary War with elements of other wars, especially the French and Indian War (which had been covered, at least in its Michigan-area aspects, during a unit on Michigan history that these students experienced as fourth graders). McKeown and Beck (1990) found the same kinds of conflations in their interviews of fifth graders who had studied U.S. history through the colonial period but had not yet studied the Revolution. Brophy, VanSledright, and Bredin (in press b) discuss potential implications of these conflations for adjustments in the elementary school social studies curriculum, including the possibility of postponing coverage of state history until after students have been introduced to chronologically organized treatment of U.S. history.

Discussion

Students' Knowledge and Misconceptions

As they began the unit, most students' knowledge about the English colonies in America was limited to information about the Pilgrims and the first Thanksgiving that is traditionally taught in the early grades. They knew that the Pilgrims had landed at Plymouth Rock, but they did not have information about the first settlements at Roanoke Island, Jamestown, or Plymouth Plantation. They did not know much about the events that transpired, either in

Europe or in America, between 1607 and 1776. They thought of colonies as small settlements (e.g., villages surrounded by stockades), usually without knowing much about the relationship between the colony and the mother country or the reasons why mother countries wanted to establish colonies in the New World. Except for the few who remembered that the Pilgrims came for religious freedom or to escape a mean king, they did not know much about who came to America from Europe or why they decided to come. Some of them harbored persistent misconceptions, such as that the early emigrants were escaped slaves or that they wanted to leave Europe because it was too crowded.

By the end of the unit, the students had acquired a good deal of information about the colonies. Much of it focused on the early settlements at Roanoke Island, Jamestown, and Plymouth, as well as on the institution of slavery. With the help of stories drawn from children's literature, the teacher largely succeeded in her goal of helping her students to develop appreciation for the challenges faced by these early emigrants by making the period "come alive" for them.

The students developed a better knowledge and appreciation of these early emigrants as people: who they were, where they came from, why they came to America, and what their lives were like in the colonies. Because so much of this information was new to them, the students frequently confused things (John Smith with John White, events at Jamestown with events at Plymouth) and probably overgeneralized some of the specific examples they studied (thinking of all colonies as small settlements surrounded by stockades, thinking that all children in all of the colonies lived like Sarah Morton). They also remained fuzzy about the timelines involved and about the development of the colonies once they became firmly established as 13 sizeable and populous political entities (i.e., not just a few small villages). Still, it was clear that the students

had developed initial ideas that enabled them to understand such things as the distinction between the initial explorers and the later colonists, the fact that European countries established colonies on land that they had explored and claimed earlier, that these European countries simply appropriated or took by force lands occupied by Native Americans, and that, in addition to Pilgrims and others seeking religious freedom, the colonies were populated by Europeans who came seeking a fortune or a better life and by Africans who had been captured and sold into slavery.

Many of the details that the students remembered and emphasized in their responses were key elements in the stories that they had heard during the unit. These data underscore the power of the narrative format, and especially stories of conflict and heroism, to capture children's imagination and help them to remember connected sets of factual information (Egan, 1988). The same data also indicate, however, how these stories tend to focus the students' attention on particular incidents and details. One side effect of this may be to minimize attention to or encourage somewhat distorted learning of important concepts and generalizations. The tendency to think of colonies as small villages surrounded by stockades or to think that all colonial children lived lives like Sarah Morton have already been mentioned. Other examples include a tendency to think of governments primarily as ways to force people to work for the communal good (based on what the students had learned about John Smith's rules and the Mayflower Compact) and the notion that Europeans did not know how to farm (based on the traditional Thanksgiving story) or that most of the emigrants came here to engage in fortune-hunting activities rather than farming (based on stories about early Jamestown).

To the extent that the students' ideas about the colonial period remained rooted in what they had learned about the earliest settlements, their later

learning about the American Revolution would tend to be distorted. That is, they would tend to think of the Revolution as a squabble between King George and a relative handful of colonists, rather than as an attempt by a sizable and populous confederation of colonies to secure their political independence from a leading imperial nation.

The students were fuzzy about the geographical aspects of colonial life. Even though unreliability of a fresh water source had been emphasized as one of the problems with the selection of the original Jamestown site, most students failed to indicate appreciation of the fact that securing access to fresh drinking water was a major consideration in establishing early settlements. Nor did the students show much appreciation of the fact that there were no roads at the time and that inland waterways were important as transportation routes and locations for new settlements. Also, except for general differences in climate, the students had not yet learned much about the geographical reasons behind the different economic emphases (and related factors such as the relative emphasis on slavery) that developed in northern, middle, and southern colonies. In contrast to the previous year, these students did learn a great deal about who the slaves were, how they had been brought to America, and how they lived and were treated on plantations.

Gender and Achievement Level Differences

The responses of the boys and of the girls were generally much more similar than different. However, the boys were relatively more likely to offer generalizations about the early settlements and to talk about facts such as their forms of governance, whereas the girls were relatively more likely to talk about the hardships that families faced in these early settlements

(especially by the children), to talk about slavery, and to mention female individuals (Pocahontas, Virginia Dare, and especially, Sarah Morton). Girls have been more likely than boys to focus on historical information about particular females or details that have special relevance for female roles in all of our interviews.

Achievement-level differences were less obvious. The high-achieving boys generally gave more complete and accurate responses than the average- and low-achieving boys, although these differences usually were not extreme. There was no clear achievement level trend among the girls, because of individual differences in their background knowledge and response styles. Teri was a generally high-achieving student but she apparently did not have much interest in history. She also was a reluctant interviewee, declining to respond unless she was sure of her answers. In contrast, Rita was a generally low-achieving student but she was interested in history, had picked up considerable information from personal reading and family experiences, and spoke freely in response to interview questions.

Need to Put Learning Into Context

Taken together, the data suggest that the teacher was effective in accomplishing what she sought to accomplish: to develop students' knowledge about and appreciation of the kinds of people who came to settle in the early colonies, the reasons why they came, and the conditions of their lives. The data also suggest the need to help the students place this learning into larger contexts, in two respects.

First, it was clear from these and earlier interviews (Brophy, VanSledright, & Bredin, 1992; VanSledright, Brophy, & Bredin, 1992) that students had trouble understanding the similarities and differences between life in the colonies and

life back in England, not just because they had not learned much yet about life in the colonies, but also because they had not learned much yet about life back in England. We believe that, prior to beginning instruction about U.S. history to elementary students, a few lessons should be invested in teaching some key information about world history and about the organization of society and the conditions of everyday life in Europe in the 15th-17th centuries. This would provide a context for students' study of the encounter between the Old and the New Worlds and of the exploration and colonization of the New World by western European nations that occurred within a larger context of empire building and developments in global trade that were occurring at the time. It would be helpful for students to know, for example, that life in Europe during the 15th and 16th centuries was modern in many respects but still lacked engine-powered transportation and electronic communications; that cities and towns had developed but Europe was not overcrowded; that there were streets and roads but only horse-drawn vehicles; that there were books and newspapers but no radio or television; that most people still lived and worked on farms; and so on.

Along with information of this sort that would help students learn about the colonies within the context of prior global history that led up to their founding, students also will need help in connecting these early settlements to the forward march of history. They will need to learn that the term "colony" that is initially applied to the early settlements at Jamestown and Plymouth later refers to the much larger geographical areas that became the first 13 states. They may need help in recognizing when the term begins to be used with this second meaning. They also may need help in appreciating that over 150 years elapsed between the founding of the earliest settlements and the initiation of the American Revolution, and that during that the time meaning of the term "colony" shifted from a small settlement to a much larger and more

populous collection of communities that operated in many ways like a modern state (but was still under the dominion of England). This would help them to appreciate the scope and geopolitical aspects of the American Revolution, so they would not view it as nothing more than a few villages telling King George that they were not going to listen to him anymore.

Finally, the students might be helped to appreciate the fact that, during the approximately 150 years of the colonial period, the colonists did not simply recreate England in North America. The development of colonial cultures and customs was influenced by what emigrants from several European nations and slaves from Africa brought with them from their countries of origin, as well as by what the colonists learned from their interactions with various groups of Native Americans. The blending of these influences produced unique patterns that gradually differentiated colonial world views and lifestyles from those prevalent in England, creating uniquely American cultures and customs.

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